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PUBLIC OPINION

AND

LORD BEACONSFIELD

1875—1880

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BY

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OF THE INNER TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

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IN TWO VOLUMES

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PART III.—*Continued.*

COURSE OF PUBLIC OPINION AND EVENTS.

PUBLIC OPINION

AND

LORD BEACONSFIELD.

[1875—1880.]

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RECONCILIATION PERIOD.

§ 1. *General View.*

At the beginning of September, Public Opinion was vehemently pressing the Cabinet to adopt the policy of Emancipation, and raging against their unwillingness to move in that direction. Three months later we shall see Public Opinion regarding, with something like general approval, the mission of Lord Salisbury to sit beside Sir Henry Elliot in the Conference of Constantinople. From these facts it follows that during the interval a reconciliation was somehow effected between the Cabinet and Public Opinion. Such a reconciliation might be the result of a belief in the conversion of the Cabinet to the "violet" policy,—and this, whether the conversion were real or only apparent; or, on the other hand, it might be the result of a change in Public Opinion itself as to the merits of the "violet" policy. Speaking from the "violet" point of view, the reconciliation might be due either to a conversion of the Cabinet, or to a reaction in Public Opinion; respective circumstances, which would be apt to be spoken of, from the other point of view, as a surrender on the part of the Ministry,

or a return to sanity on the part of the nation. Now, it will be pretty clear, as we shall find, that the general approval of Lord Salisbury's mission was based upon a belief that the policy he went to support was a policy of "Emancipation," and that the "red" element in the Cabinet was finally overruled. Speaking broadly, then, the essential characteristic of the Reconciliation Period is a belief in the conversion of the Cabinet, or in other words a belief that "The Agitation had done its work."

But the reconciliation never got to the length of believing that the conversion of the Government was hearty. It was recognised that the result, such as it was, was only being accomplished by dint of a constant steady pull against an undercurrent setting strongly the other way; and there was no confidence felt that the Government would not "swing back" into their old position, if the pressure upon them were removed. Hence, the meetings and other demonstrations of opinion continued to take place, and in this sense the Agitation was maintained all through the Reconciliation Period, though the weight of the pressure was considerably relaxed.

But while belief in the conversion was thus the main characteristic of the Reconciliation Period, it was, in a secondary degree, marked by something like a reaction in the attitude of Public Opinion itself. We may regard this as a back eddy, not strong enough to prevent events from drifting on the whole in the direction of the main current, but often catching them in whirlpools, and rendering it hard to see in which direction the current was really flowing. Public Opinion no longer appeared to be approximately unanimous in demanding that the English Government should insist on practical independence for the Provinces. In fact after the enthusiasm of the Great Agitation had a little subsided, in the glow of which all differences had well-nigh disappeared, the course of Public Opinion became much less simple, and the Reconciliation Period is a time of peculiar complexity. With the cessation of the steady set of a united and overwhelming stream of Public Opinion for Emancipation, the opposing and cross-currents again made their influence felt.

Moreover, from this point we have not only to deal with different currents of Public Opinion setting in different directions simultaneously, but also with the fact that people now looked upon the Cabinet as a body in which there were complex currents of purpose too. Consequently they no longer accepted a declaration

or a speech by any one of the Ministers as the utterance of the corporate body.

In fact the belief in the conversion of the Cabinet went pretty much *pari passu* with a belief in its duality. No one, at all events later than the early days of the Reconciliation Period, believed in the possibility of Lord Beaconsfield's conversion, and the belief that the Cabinet had come round to the "violet" policy, meant a belief that the Premier was no longer master in his own Cabinet, and that the section of which he was the true leader was submerged. We shall find one feature of the climax of the reconciliation to have been an expectation that Lord Beaconsfield would resign.

During the climax of the agitation all the factors of anti-Turkism, except those which were directly appealed to by the feelings of humanity aroused by the atrocities, were overshadowed. It was the very strength and pungency of the feelings which were aroused, that made it absolutely impossible for people to remain for any protracted period subject to the full force of their influence. Subsequently the other factors emerged, and during the Reconciliation Period emancipation was no longer advocated from an almost purely humanitarian point of view. At the same time the especially sentimental elements of anti-Turkism were a little discredited and it began to be recognised that if the political end of obtaining emancipation were achieved this was enough, without going out of our way to blacken the Turks.

Thus there was an increased disposition to allow that the desired object of emancipation for the Provincials *ought* only to be pursued concurrently with the peace of Europe and resistance to Russian aggression, to which desiderata, to be sure, it was regarded as the best means. Hence a change of tone was noticeable, which consisted mainly in the greater emphasis given to the "diplomatic" as distinct from the "sentimental" factors of Public Opinion.

Perhaps too it was recognised that some of the more vehement and rhetorical denunciations which had been indulged in were calculated to prejudice the "violet" policy.

Such language provoked remonstrances from various quarters, and explanations were made with a view to reduce it to its real significance, explanations which perhaps somewhat failed in their intended effect.

Moreover, an immediate effect of the very symptoms of conversion displayed by the Government was to bring about a certain disintegration of opinion, and this disintegration tended to reaction.

It was not the *whole* of the "violet" party that believed in the conversion of the Government. Some believed and some were still sceptical.

Nearly corresponding with the schism in the "violet" ranks of which we have just spoken, there was a line of cleavage between those who were contented with a small measure of emancipation, and those who still insisted that it should be thorough. We distinguish one stream of Public Opinion still insisting that nothing short of practical independence was adequate to the exigencies of the case, and another that, having become imbued with a sense of the risks and difficulties involved in carrying out so great a change, began to evince a preference for some scheme of "local administrative autonomy," such as Lord Derby was supposed to have in view.

While the man who disbelieved in the genuineness of the conversion would see in this proposal only a disguised scheme of "Mahometan Reform," the more credulous would be content with it as the best solution the circumstances admitted.

As long as the English Cabinet was believed to be resolutely opposed to what was regarded as the only solution which could insure permanent European peace, or remove the grievances which had driven Servia and would drive Russia to war, so long, that is to say, as the English Cabinet was believed to be resolutely opposed to emancipation, assertions that agitation hampered the executive Government, or endangered peace, had little weight with those who were actuated by the political notions of anti-Turkism. But the case was widely different, when it was believed that the Government had abandoned the traditional support of Turkey and their legalistic view of the treaties as forbidding interference between the Porte and the Provincials, and that they had become converted to the merits of "Emancipation" as the policy best calculated really to secure the ultimate ends they professed to have in view. And when a man inclining to this estimate of the attitude of the Government was assured that he had been hampering the Government which all along had been alive to the importance of all these considerations, while at the same time the dangers of giving an opening to Russian aggression, and of provoking a great war, were still dwelt upon, he would be willing to believe that there might be obstacles to the realisation of full practical Independence known to the Cabinet and not known to himself. It might well be that the Government was in possession

of information which could not be made public, but which enabled it to foresee danger in insisting on a too sweeping measure of emancipation.[1]

There would be a natural tendency to believe that the executive Government might be trusted with considerable latitude in the course which it might take to secure the best possible result, or nearest possible attainment of all the desired ends. Perhaps, too, there was a little compunction at having harassed a Government which had all along been doing the right thing. Certainly there was a desire to let bygones be bygones, and to confirm the Government in the new attitude which people believed they had taken up. Thus the assertions of Government organs that Government as a fact was striving and always had striven for good government, coupled with warnings of danger to the peace of Europe and from Russia, tended to make men ready to think there was in fact danger which could not be overlooked, and to prepare the way for Erubescence, and the coming to the front of a policy of active hostility to Russia.

Twice during the course of the Reconciliation Period we find the belief in some imminent danger from Russia bringing on a marked access of Erubescence, in face of which the "violet" policy for a moment seemed somewhat discredited.

We shall find that at each of these crises (which were singularly parallel to one another) the course which the Government pursued was admirably adapted to strengthen the tendencies in Public Opinion which were making in a "red" direction. Just as the Government had lulled Public Opinion by allowing it to proceed under the misconception that they had been converted to an Emancipation policy, whereas, in fact, such was not the case, so at each of these crises they strengthened the support they would command in pursuing a "red" policy, by allowing Public Opinion to proceed under a false impression about the attitude of Russia. But on each of these two occasions, with more accurate knowledge of the facts, came a renewed and strengthened belief that the "violet" policy *alone* could meet the danger of the time, and the belief too that within the Cabinet an attempt of the advocates of a "red" policy to gain the upper hand had been foiled.

Thus the two episodes must be regarded as only temporary checks to the progress of the Reconciliation.

[1] Compare *Times* Sept. 28th, *ante*, vol. i. p. 430.

§ 2. *Reasons for believing in the Conversion of the Government.*

It may be remarked that Public Opinion was likely *a priori* to believe in the conversion of the Government. Its readiness of belief follows from its faith in its own power to assert its sovereignty. So strong was the belief that the Government *must* yield, that people attached exaggerated weight to slight indications that it had yielded, and were disposed to be satisfied with an amount of evidence that otherwise they would perhaps have held to be insufficient.

We have noted the importance attached to Lord Salisbury's sympathetic tone at the Mansion House on Aug. 3rd.[1]

Mr. Bourke's letter, read at the Nottingham meeting [2] is spoken of by the *Times*[3] as a "creditable departure" from "official reticence." All these things were accepted as straws indicating an approaching change in the wind. The incipient belief in the conversion of the Government as a whole dates from the speeches of Lord Derby on Sept. 11th,[4] and of Sir Stafford Northcote on Sept. 16th.[5]

The following passages could certainly be taken for enunciations of the "violet" policy.

> For these unfortunate Bulgarians who have suffered so much, they have no doubt a right to such reparation as it is now possible to make. (Cheers.) They have also the undoubted right to the signal, conspicuous, and exemplary punishment of those who have been the offenders, and I think they may also fairly claim, in one manner or the other, that we should take steps such as will prevent the recurrence of similar actions. (Hear.)—*Lord Derby.*

> We have long known it was our duty. We accept the duty—we accept it as freely as any of those who challenged us could wish, to fulfil the moral obligation into which this country entered by the Treaty of 1856 at the close of the Crimean War, to use its efforts to protect the Christians of the Turkish provinces from misgovernment. . . . . [England] is acting in concert with other nations in endeavouring to bring about a solution of these difficulties; and depend upon it, if we are happy enough to bring about such a solution, it will be one which I will not say will content everybody, but it will be one which will allow us to say that we have done that which it was in our power to do to put a stop for the future to the evils which have so justly aroused the moral sense of England.—*Sir Stafford Northcote.*

Moreover, these utterances were not the only indications that

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 379. [2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 389. [3] Sept. 2nd.
[4] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 419. [5] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 417.

the direction of English diplomacy had undergone a change since the time when it sent the English fleet to Besika Bay.

Allusions to the negotiations which were in progress were frequent in the newspapers, and it was understood that England was taking a leading part in pressing terms upon the Porte. The contents of one of the two important despatches of Sept. 21st,—the despatch, namely, which contained Lord Derby's "English terms"[1]—was allowed to transpire. This disclosed a proposal made by the English Government for a solution on the lines of the "violet" policy, even if to many it seemed miserably inadequate. The proposal for such a solution seemed to accord with Lord Derby's admission to the deputation on Sept. 27th of which we have already spoken.[2]

On the same occasion Lord Derby stated to his interlocutors that the demand for the punishment of the authors of the atrocities, a demand embodied in the other of the despatches of Sept. 21st,[3] had been made.

The effect of these circumstances in inducing a belief that the Government had been converted, however unwillingly, from their first policy appears in the comments on these Ministerial utterances. They fall into three groups.

First, we have those critics, and among them were the *Times* and *Daily News*, who showed a disposition to believe in the conversion. Secondly, we have the Ministerial press, which rejoices in this changed tone of those who lately had been so vehement. In the third place, we have the sceptical section of the "violet" party.

The supporters of the Ministry did not at first impute to those whom they congratulated on their change of tone a renunciation of the "violet" and an adoption of the "red" policy, but rather a willingness to distinguish between what was, and what was not, practicable in the "violet" direction and a disposition to refrain from demanding impossibilities. Much stress was laid on the assertion that the Government were doing everything that reasonable men could demand in the direction of obtaining "good government." The suggestion that this was an entirely new departure on the part of the Government was repudiated, and so the incipient reconciliation was represented as the result of the clearing up of a misunderstanding as to the position of the

[1] *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 324. See *post*, § 6. [2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 427.
[3] *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 316. See *post*, § 6.

Government, rather than as a fundamental change of policy on either hand.

At the same time, the section of "violet" opinion which had shown itself disposed to be placable, is taunted with having been astute to discover evidence of a change in the purposes of the Government, and so to retreat from a position they felt to be untenable.

> The *Daily News* observes: Lord Derby's assurances are a great advance upon anything we have previously heard from the Government. They do not prove that the remonstrances which have gone up from the whole country were unnecessary, but they show that these remonstrances have not been in vain, and also that they must be powerfully sustained.—(Sept. 12th.)
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> That Lord Derby is not wholly insensible to the power of the grandest demonstration of public opinion which our generation, or perhaps any generation of Englishmen, has seen, appears by the fact that he obeys it; but he does so no further than he can help.—(Sept. 13th.)
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> The Foreign Secretary was undoubtedly sincere in these declarations, but he does not know how great an advance they indicate on his former position. He does not remember the standpoint he occupied—we will not say a few months, but a few weeks ago. In this kind of forgetfulness he does not stand alone. The movement of the nation has dragged him along and others with him, and while they think their views of what is practicable, and therefore worthy of pursuit, are the same now as they have been, they have in truth undergone a development of the most remarkable character. . . . The maintenance of the territorial integrity of Turkey is now the solitary condition he puts forward as inviolable; the maintenance of the authority of the Porte *in statu quo* was the condition he regarded as indispensable a few weeks since. . . . We believe it to be of the highest practical importance that Lord Derby should realise the advance he has made. . . . If the Government will be resolute in pressing for real guarantees against the repetition of these enormities, every one will be content to await the result. The guarantees must, however, be real, and they must be demanded with undeviating singleness of purpose. —*T.* Sept. 12th.
>
> There is a growing tendency to agreement between what is said by the critics of the Government and the Ministers themselves respecting the duty of England to the subject races of Turkey. A great change has come over the feelings of the nation within the last few weeks, and the current is sweeping along even the official leaders of the Conservative Party. Were Parliament sitting, Lord Beaconsfield would certainly not deliver such a speech as that which closed his career in the House of Commons. . . . The speech of Mr. Gladstone may be taken to express the

mind of those who demand most, and that of Lord Derby the reply of those who would concede least. Yet both speeches have many points of contact. [Mr. Gladstone's] only absolute condition is that the protection of the Christians shall be "effectual." Nor does Lord Derby openly combat such a demand. . . . At the same time, it is impossible to read the two speeches without detecting a profound difference of bias. Mr. Gladstone's tendency is to take the initiative; Lord Derby's to wait and see what initiative is taken by others. Lord Derby betrayed fears which might easily mislead when, with less than his usual discretion, he asked, "Who is to rule in Constantinople?" It may be doubted, on the other hand, whether Mr. Gladstone has sufficiently asked himself how deep is the apprehension laid bare by that frank question. He says that the "standing hobgoblin of Russia" is out of repair and not available. It has certainly seen better days than these, and it is a little tattered by hard usage in times of panic at which it is now safe to point sarcasms. But the "hobgoblin" still exists, and might be more available than Mr. Gladstone imagines. . . . If in the course of approaching negotiations she were to ask for too great a change in Bulgaria, it might be possible to revive paralysing suspicions in this country. . . . This country would certainly not like to see Russia winning a merely political advantage in Bulgaria. At the same time it will be profoundly dissatisfied with any arrangement which fails to give the population "effectual protection" against brutal violence. Even if public opinion should not go quite so far as Mr. Gladstone would wish, it will certainly quicken the pace of politicians who tend to stand still.—*T.* Sept. 13th.

The public meetings which have been held throughout the country have instructed Lord Derby, and with the utmost jealousy of the rush and impulse of democratic movement we cannot regret them; nor shall we regret their continuing to be held as long as they continue to educate the Foreign Secretary. . . . It is not so long since that Lord Derby's predominant idea in respect to the war was that it must be fought out. . . . This idea is now abandoned. The passive preference for peace which Lord Derby shares with all men of good sense and economical principles has been exchanged for an active furtherance of peace.—*T.* Sept. 14th.

Lord Derby has said enough, in supporting the claim of Bulgaria to be secured against a renewal of outrage, to justify the opinion that he is not substantially divided in ideas from Mr. Gladstone, who in his pamphlet has expressed so much confidence in Lord Derby's action.—*Mr. Arthur Arnold* in *T.* Sept. 14th.

As a consequence of the agitation, Her Majesty's Government had already altered their policy, and had done what they refused to do when they declined to join in the Berlin Note. They were now told that Her Majesty's Government had made a proposal, the effect of which was to give good material guarantees for the well governing of those provinces, and to sustain the principles

conceded to them in past times, which had never come into effect. Was not that a justification for every public meeting that had been held?—*Mr. A. S. Ayrton at Kensington, D. N.* Sept. 26th.

[Sir S. Northcote's declarations] leave the real policy of the Government as deep a mystery as ever. . . . Verbally the principles of Lord Derby's Turkish policy are almost identical with those of Mr. Gladstone's. At least, it would be easy to draw up a form of words which would express the policy of both. But the tone, the incidental remarks, the criticisms, the blank refusals of Lord Derby show that he and Mr. Gladstone mean very different things; and Sir Stafford Northcote does not help us to measure the extent of the disagreement. The foreign policy of England, we are told, is to maintain peace, but not a dishonourable or a selfish peace. Such a truism Pitt might have uttered in the midst of the great French War. Nor do we gain much from the admission that in no nation can peace be permanently and satisfactorily established without "a system of good government." He thinks that foreign statesmen may misread the real mind of the country, and he frankly owns that the Government may be crippled if it should be supposed to be defying the majority of the people. Nor can there be any doubt that he points to a real danger. But he forgets to add that the Ministry could put an end to it in an hour. Lord Derby could calm the tumult by a single speech, if he were to condemn with unequivocal heartiness the inveterate misrule of Turkey, and to declare that he would use the influence of England to secure for the Christians of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria as large a measure of self-protection as the maintenance of the framework of the Turkish Empire would permit. Let him say this frankly, clearly, decisively, and he will have no reason to complain that the country refuses to put trust in the Government. But he has spoken coldly, or not at all, of the wrongs suffered by the Christian subjects of Turkey; he has made unwelcome excuses for the conduct of the Porte; and there is only too much truth in Mr. Gladstone's charge, that the Blue-Books show "the evident sympathy with which Lord Derby details every difficulty raised by Austria in the way of such a system" as the administrative independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. . . .

If ever there was a time when the Government should frankly speak, it is now, when the public excitement has astonished the oldest politicians, and when decisions of vast importance must soon take effect in the East. No doubt the practical difficulties in the way of any settlement are immense, and the Government is not to be blamed for refusing to give a pledge that it would support any particular plan. But it is all the more needful to have a frank description of those obstacles. Serious mischief is done by the reticence of the Ministry—a reticence seen in the fact that Mr. Baring's Report is still unpublished as well as in the tone of Lord Derby's speeches. . . .

The country understands that England has made herself pre-eminently responsible for the condition of the Christians in Turkey;

that they have been systematically wronged; that Turkey has made a hundred promises to amend, and has broken every one of them; and that some of its Provinces can never be freed from oppression, nor Europe from the risk of war, until they receive some degree of administrative independence. Does the Ministry agree with these propositions? If it can explicitly and heartily declare that it does, it will not lack that moral strength of national sympathy which, as Sir Stafford Northcote sees, is absolutely essential in its negotiations with the other Great Powers. Continental statesmen may be excused for refusing to believe that the mind of England is correctly expressed by a Government whose reticence has provoked so vehement a protest. The only way in which the Ministers can give full effect to the influence of England is to come to an understanding with their own countrymen before trying to make arrangements with foreign States.—*T.* Sept. 18th.

The *Daily News* observes: Sir Stafford Northcote's speech at Edinburgh showed that Ministers are not easy, knowing, as they do, that their policy has not satisfied the country. They would like to regain the public confidence. It is the easiest thing in the world. The country is in a most generous mood, and would be truly grateful to the Government if it would only give it some justification for believing that it was in agreement with the nation as to the objects of policy to be pursued. There are signs that the cause on which the public has set its mind is making progress even in the councils of the Government. But why do not Ministers speak out in a manner which cannot be mistaken?—(Sept. 19th.)

The *Standard* observes that it may be convenient to those who are trying now to dam the flood which they loosed to find that the declarations of the Government are precisely in accordance with the advice they have been giving; but the eagerness which they show to welcome any signs of accommodation in the Government can only be regarded as an evidence of their consciousness that the public, after this long debauch in philanthropic emotion, is returning to sobriety and to the practical business of life. The *Standard* believes the fact to be so, in spite of the attempts to keep up the agitation.—(Sept. 13th.)

To those of our readers who happen to agree with the opinions of this journal on the subjects which now agitate the world, Lord Derby's careful and explicit speech of yesterday will be profoundly satisfactory. . . . . We observe that the *Times* is equally satisfied—because it is convinced, from a general review of human nature, that Lord Derby *has* changed his mind, whatever he may say; though of course he is not aware of it.—*P. M. G.* Sept. 13th.

Without pausing to criticise the evolutions of those who since Lord Derby's explanations of policy are struggling to explain away the fantastic demands which they had promulgated, the attention of all practical and intelligent persons will now be bent on the efforts in progress to obtain peace. . . . . We are glad,

under these most anxious circumstances, to note the calmer mood of the community. Reason has well-nigh re-established her sway; the vast proportions of the political danger are becoming better understood, and if any abroad have counted upon paralysing the British Government with British help, we believe the altered language of the press and people will quickly disappoint them.—*D. T.* Sept. 14th.

Again, the *Daily Telegraph* alludes to

the impressive appeal to the nation for forbearance made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at Edinburgh. The Government is succeeding in its endeavours; as for the guarantees, "No man need fear that they will be illusory."—(Sept. 18th.)

The English Government is taking the lead in Europe in insisting on Reform. [It proceeds to contrast reform with autonomy, to the disadvantage of the latter.]—(Sept. 22nd.)

The *Standard* considers that the speech of Sir Stafford Northcote at Edinburgh, following upon the explanations of Lord Derby, cannot but have the effect of calming that insensate agitation into which a portion of the public has permitted itself to be thrown upon the Turkish Question. No words can be plainer than those in which Sir Stafford Northcote declares that the Government of Her Majesty is doing its utmost in promoting the welfare of the people who have been the victims of the late barbarities.—(Sept. 18th.)

The *Spectator* spoke of the passage which has been just quoted[1] as the only satisfactory sentence in Lord Derby's speech and adds:

That would be satisfactory enough, if it stood alone. Unfortunately, it stands close to the remark that the only really effective remedy for Bosnia and Herzegovina,—administrative separation from Turkey,—appears practically unworkable, and that Lord Derby will never be quack enough to sanction what seems to him practically unworkable. The speech had a cowed and bewildered ring in it.—(Sept. 16th.)

Those who hold that Lord Derby has come round to the popular conviction as to the crisis in Turkey take a very hasty and superficial view of his speech. The *Pall Mall Gazette* is far nearer the truth when it remarks, not without sinister exultation, that Lord Derby holds in substance to the same policy. . . . . What deceives people with the notion that Lord Derby has come round to the view of the country is the admission that Bulgaria ought to be guaranteed against any liability to the recurrence of such horrors as she has recently suffered; and to have the offenders punished by some exemplary punishment. — *Spec.* Sept. 16th.

Were Lord Carnarvon at the Foreign Office the whole nation would be content.—*Spec.* Oct. 7th.

[1] *Ante*, p. 8.

A happy change has come alike over public affairs and public opinion since the last deputation waited on the Foreign Minister, nor could it fail to be a curious lesson in what may be termed popular meteorology, to recall the wild accusations vociferated, and the generous impossibilities insisted upon, no further back than three weeks ago, when the storm of "Autonomy" was blowing most furiously. . . . . If the use which some persons made of so noble a protest appeared mischievous, the protest itself was eminently necessary and serviceable, nor would we have had the philanthropic force of this cyclone of feeling diminished by a single breath. But it was highly desirable that calmer weather should ensue before statesmanship had to "lay a course," and this is what happened so soon as the sensible British public began to understand the facts and possibilities of the matter. . . . . Anybody who to-day will be at the trouble to compare the former passionate utterances of the principal organs of "Autonomy" among us with their present really rational language may measure the immense progress made by some of them in comprehending the Eastern Question. . . . . The plans of pacification and reform are not yet indeed before the Powers; but the objects of them are agreed upon, and these, as stated by our correspondent, are truly large, being "to secure religious equality before the law and to protect the inhabitants of the provinces from the abusive exercise of authority on the part of Turkish rulers in the districts committed to them." If the Six Powers carry out a programme of reform thus broadly framed, and if the Porte assents to practical guarantees of its good operation, this will be a rich result of the emotions wakened among us. . . . Nay, we are not without hope that when it comes, in the European Council, to the matter of arranging religious equality and civil liberties for Bosnia, the Herzegovina, and the Macedonian districts, Lord Derby may be found going rather farther in the same direction than those who have done their best to mar his efforts. We ourselves know no reason why what is good and right and reasonable for the Turkish Christians north of the Balkans should not be useful and acceptable for those also in Roumelia, Albania, Thessaly, and elsewhere; nor would it surprise us if, so far from the Porte being obdurate about this grand extension of liberty, it should be seen ardently welcoming a plan which secured it from further assaults at the fair and willing price of free and equal local institutions throughout the Empire. For ourselves, too, an agreeable change has arrived, as well as for the Ministry and the country. We have at last leisure to look back with pride and satisfaction upon the course taken by us, and to feel that it was rightly and wisely adopted, though it seemed for the time to separate us from old associations. Applauding the generous indignation of the country at the "Bulgarian atrocities," and warmly supporting its demand that no such outrages should ever again be permitted to disgrace Europe, we nevertheless advocated the patience and respect due to British Ministers at

such a crisis, and steadfastly kept before the public those limitations which the political situation imposed upon philanthropic desires.—*D. T.* Sept. 27th.

There is good reason to believe that the country is again resuming its calmness, that the refusal of so many of us to look facts in the face is yielding, and that the distinction between what ought to be done and what can be done is again coming into recognition. After a sharp fight for fact and common sense, we have the satisfaction of witnessing the gradual subjugation of our opponents, not to us but to them. . . . The nation has sobered; and now the most portentous We in the English press affects to lead popular opinion in a different line. Comfortable it is to read in the *Times* what we read there to-day! Mr. Gladstone is loftily rebuked for doing what Mr. Gladstone was eloquently encouraged in only a fortnight ago.—*P. M. G.* Sept. 26th.[1]

Early in the discussion about the new attitude of the Government Mr. Gladstone published a letter which marks the fact that he was led to despair of the conversion just when a large number of people were beginning to believe that it had been accomplished.

The speeches of Lord Derby at the Foreign Office on Monday undoubtedly constitute a ministerial manifesto. . . . The journals which support the policy of Turkey are naturally delighted with them, and exult in any disposition which may have been shown elsewhere to put upon them the most favourable construction. In my opinion they afford ample shelter (which is also fair notice) for a policy identical in spirit with that hitherto pursued. . . The nation has shown its desire, but has yet to show that its desire is its will, and that it shall be done.

When I published ten days ago, it was my hope that the mind of the Government might receive the requisite impulse from the national movement, without involving any other aid than that of its assembled wisdom. This hope has disappeared; and I now cordially follow Lord Hartington in the judgment he has given—that the circumstances of the time demand the early reassembling of Parliament.—*Mr. Gladstone, Letter* in *T.* and *D. N.* Sept. 16th.

Mr. Gladstone's action at this crisis in sounding a note of warning to those who were disposed to be credulous is an incident of some importance.

After reading it there is an end of the belief which we, for our part, held without doubting till Saturday, that Mr. Gladstone has no party spirit, and no party spite in the matter. All notions of that sort must be given up. When he wrote that letter he meant vengeance against the party that had supplanted him in

[1] The allusion is to Mr. Gladstone's speech at Staindrop, and the contention of the *Times* that it was premature to call in the aid of party organisation, *post*, § 4.

office. [The letter had lost nearly all its importance by the evening of its publication by means of Sir Stafford Northcote's speech, and the news published the same afternoon that the English Government had offered mediation and obtained a suspension of hostilities.]

This one fact disposes of a vast deal of disturbing agitation, and we may hope that what Sir Stafford Northcote had to say will have a similar effect. He did not, indeed, promise that arrangements shall be made with Russia to eject the Turks from their European provinces; he did not pledge the Government to measures of absolute insistence on autonomy for Bosnia, Herzegovina, Bulgaria and such other provinces as may follow their example and respond to the efforts of foreign agitators by insurrection. But he did answer clearly to the one intelligent and honourable demand of the nation, that the Government should do all that lies in its power, should strain every practicable endeavour, to obtain reparation for the hideous cruelties perpetrated in Bulgaria and to prevent their recurrence.—*P. M. G.* Sept. 18th.

Mr. Gladstone spoke of himself as following Lord Hartington in the demand for an autumn session, but Lord Hartington's speech had been delivered before these new lights had been thrown upon the Government policy,[1] and for some time Lord Hartington did not explain what interpretation he was inclined to put upon them, and the ministerial organs took his silence as an indication that he attached himself to the "reasonable" section of Liberals.[2]

With Mr. Gladstone's letter may be contrasted a speech made by Mr. Forster, who, like the Marquis of Hartington, had taken the opportunity of the vacation to visit the East.

The evening that I got to Constantinople I went into one of the narrow streets and saw a Turkish paper with a caricature at the top . . . and the caricature was this—a Turk flourishing his scimitar most belligerently, upon the back of a British sailor, against a Servian upon the back of a Russian soldier. That conveys the general impression that we had managed to produce until very lately in Turkey, and which made Turkey a very pleasant place for Englishmen to travel in. . . . Certainly the speeches that have been made by the members of the Government lately have not removed this impression. Nevertheless, I found that impression greatly vanishing from the Turkish mind. . . . The change has been caused by the expression of feeling in England. . . . I rejoice that there has been that expression. . . . It is well that that conviction, that impression, should be removed. [Where were we now? Lord Derby could tell the exact position. Of course he himself could not, but it was pretty

[1] The reference in Mr. Gladstone's letter is to Lord Hartington's speech at the Cutlers' Feast, *ante*, vol. i. p. 398.

[2] *Standard*, Sept. 9th.

evident from the public press that the Six Powers had made a demand which Turkey had refused. He hoped the refusal was not final.] I believe there are many men with whom I agree very much in this matter who are not anxious to see Turkey assent to that proposal, because they would have so very much preferred that it had been a very much stronger proposal [holding that nothing short of absolute autonomy, retaining the tributary relation only, should have been proposed for Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, even as a mere temporary settlement]. I should very much prefer that result if I saw my way to obtaining it without war, but I do not believe it can be obtained without war. . . . [He instanced arguments why] not more should be asked of the Turkish Government than is absolutely necessary to prevent these atrocities. What has been asked? I do not exactly know [but it appeared to be a demand that local self-government should be given to the Christians, and also to the Turks, in those provinces—not merely as a promise, but with a treaty-right in the Powers to see to the performance]. That is the very essence of the proposal; and I must confess that I do think it was, upon the whole, if it was made, the wisest proposal which could well be made. . . . I doubt, however, whether it would be more than a temporary solution . . . but I think it would be making a transition without actual wa[illegible] and, therefore, we ought to try it. [Finally, the British people have] come to the conclusion that this is a matter in which the fulfilment of England's duty is the best protection of English interests.—*Mr. Forster at Bradford*, Oct. 7th.

Thus, while Mr. Gladstone represented the section which was sceptical of the conversion of the Government, and was determined to adopt "that which was effectual" even if it "could not be mild,"[1] Mr. Forster represented the section which put faith in the conversion of the Government to a policy which embodied a real curtailment of the Turkish sovereignty, and which was impressed by the risks attending the attempt to impose anything beyond a mild and disguised measure of emancipation.

Mr. Forster's speech met with the warm approval of the *Times*. The *Daily News* spoke but coldly of it. The *Daily Telegraph* saw in it another sign of the "convalescence of the Liberal Party." The *Pall Mall Gazette* called it zigzagging. The *Spectator* thought he had forgotten the shot for his cartridges. The *Standard*, under a strange misapprehension, thought he shared their own anti-Russism, which saw in the fact that Russia proposed a course a sufficient reason why England should oppose it.[2]

[1] Mr. Gladstone's Blackheath speech, *ante*, vol. i. p. 412.

[2] The *Standard* says:—"He finds the 'very strongest reason' for opposing the scheme of a Conference." Mr. Forster clearly meant that we should not refuse to

The *Examiner* (Oct. 14th) pointed out that the important difference between Mr. Forster and Mr. Gladstone was that Mr. Forster believed that the Government had entered upon a "violet" policy, and would insist upon adequate guarantees for the safety of the Provincials, while Mr. Gladstone was not satisfied that such was the case.

§ 3. *A Blow in the face of Public Opinion. (The Aylesbury Speech.)*

On September 20th an event occurred which seemed calculated to bring the incipient reconciliation to an abrupt end. This was the speech delivered by the Premier at Aylesbury, at the annual dinner of the Bucks Agricultural Association.

Far from indicating any change in the purposes of the Government, or attempting to show that their aims in the pending negotiations corresponded substantially with all that was practicable and moderate in the popular demand, he struck Public Opinion a blow in the face, by boldly avowing that he was aware that the Government was not supported by the country, and by sharply distinguishing between the aims of the Government and the aims of the great movement which was going on.

Lord Beaconsfield said the Foreign Secretary had two most important ends to accomplish.

> He has at the same time to secure permanent British interests of the highest importance, and he has to secure the maintenance of European peace. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, under ordinary circumstances a British Minister so placed, whatever might have been his difficulties, would have had the consolation of knowing that he was backed by the country. (Loud cheers.) Gentlemen, it would be affectation in me for a moment to pretend that this is the position of Her Majesty's Government at this moment. Unquestionably there is a large party and a large portion of Her Majesty's subjects whose thoughts and sentiments are attracted to and absorbed in other matters than the maintenance of the permanent interests of this country, or the maintenance of peace. (Cheers.) These are matters which require and are receiving the most earnest and most constant attention of the Government, but unhappily a great portion of the people of this country, with feelings which have drawn their attention to these extraneous matters, have arrived at

welcome Russia's invitations to a Conference without having the strongest reasons for doing so. "Suppose, therefore, that there be any suggestion of a Conference, and above all Russia herself suggests a Conference, it seems to me that there ought to be the very strongest possible reason for refusing to welcome that Conference."

conclusions which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, if carried into effect, would be alike injurious to the permanent and important interests of England, and fatal to any hope or chance of maintaining the peace of Europe.

[The English are the most enthusiastic people in the world—not the most excitable, but the most enthusiastic. When that enthusiasm is exerted for a right object it is the finest force any Minister can possibly possess—even if it is excited by an inadequate cause, and directed to a result of questionable benefit, abstractedly it is an organ of vitality, and the feeling elevates the country.]

The danger at such a moment is this, that designing politicians may take advantage of such sublime sentiments and may apply them for the furtherance of their sinister ends. (Loud cheers and laughter.) I do not think that there is any language that can denounce too strongly conduct of such description. (Loud cheers.) He who at such a moment would avail himself of such a commanding sentiment in order to obtain his own individual ends, to a course which he knows, which he may know, to be injurious to the interests of his country, and not favourable to the welfare of mankind, is one whose conduct language cannot too strongly condemn. (Loud cheers.) It outrages the principle of patriotism, which is the soul of free communities; it does more than this, it influences in the most injurious manner the common welfare of humanity. (Cheers.) Such conduct, if it be pursued by any man at this moment, ought to be indignantly condemned by the people of England—(cheers)—and in the general havoc and ruin which it may accomplish it may fairly be described as worse than any of those Bulgarian atrocities—(cheers, and cries of "No, no")—of which we have heard so much.

[After the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum, Lord Derby, "who is described every day in the newspapers as the Minister who does nothing and suggests nothing," lost no time in laying down the principles on which the relations between the Porte and its Christian subjects might be established. The result was that] peace, and peace on principles which would have been approved by every wise and good man, might have been accomplished. Well, what happened? [Servia declared war.][1] This outrageous and wicked war took place—for of all the wars that ever took place there never was a war less justified than the war of Servia—(cheers, and cries of "No). They have ten thousand—I will not say ten thousand crimes, but it may have been ten thousand faults, and these faults with its weak Government may lead to crimes. But still there is not the slightest doubt as regards the relations between Servia and the Porte. Not only every principle of international law, not only every principle of public morality, but every principle of honour was outraged. . . . Well, now, what happened? You had this war. If I am straining too severely the rules of the

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 135, for the passage of Lord Beaconsfield's speech in which he describes the secret societies as declaring war on Turkey.

> Royal Agricultural Society of Bucks—(cheers, and cries of "No, no")—you really must forgive me, for I came here to talk about the brightness of your barley, and to ask whether it had the brightness which brewers love, and was not prepared to touch upon these subjects. In a very short time Servia came to England and said, "Do what you can for us." (Cheers.) We have done what we could for them. Lord Derby, the Minister who does nothing, carried them through a successful mediation under the most difficult circumstances. (Loud cheers.) Turkey was triumphant. She had crushed these ungrateful subjects of the suzerain. . . . Lord Derby has exerted the influence of this country on these points; he has absolutely induced Turkey to agree to this armistice—a virtual armistice and suspension of arms—without date, and to leave the settlement of the terms of peace between Servia and Turkey to the decision of the Six Powers. (Loud cheers). . . . The next step is for Lord Derby, on the part of the Government, to recur exactly to the position which he occupied before the Servian war. (Cheers.) What was that position? It was an attempt to settle, with the concurrence of all the Powers of Europe, the relations, the future relations, that should subsist between the Christian subjects of the Porte and the Turkish Government. (Hear, hear.) Why are we to be opposed, why are we to be attacked because such is our object and such is our aim? (Cheers.) The country, in some of its exhibitions of feeling, has completely out-Heroded the most extravagant conceptions. They tell us that nothing will satisfy them except the expulsion of the Turks from Europe and the institution of a Sclavonic Government, whether Imperial or Royal or Republican I am at a loss to know. . . . Can we do more than act with the other Powers on the avowed basis laid down by Lord Derby—namely, that we should now proceed to consider the establishment of satisfactory relations between the Porte and its Christian subjects, and lay down also the general principles upon which that settlement can be founded? Is it wiser that we should allow the Government to go on and to carry, if they can, these plans into effect or not? That is really the question for England to consider.

The Premier concluded his speech by an allusion to "wild schemes" of driving a great and numerous race from Europe, and founding Governments of an independent character; and to Mr. Gladstone's "magnanimous" explanation, when he felt he had made a mistake,

> because humanitarian politicians do not always look before they leap. . . . I myself have no doubt that Mr. Gladstone did not mean the expulsion of the Turkish nation, but with regard to the expulsion of the Ministers, I doubt whether they are Turks whom he wishes to expel. Let others follow Mr. Gladstone's example, and recall any preposterous notion they may have had that you can suddenly turn all the Turks out of Europe. . . . I

> am quite convinced that Mr. Gladstone, on reflection, never intended anything of the kind. If he had gone to the House of Commons, and proposed to the House of Commons and to the Speaker to attend Greenwich Fair, and to go to the top of Greenwich Hill, and all roll down to the bottom, I declare he would not have proposed anything more absurdly incongruous.—*Lord Beaconsfield at Aylesbury*, Sept. 20th.

What could be made of such a declaration as this—a declaration breathing sympathy for the "red," and scorn and reprobation for the "violet" policy? What could be made of it by those who were becoming reconciled, only by reason of their belief that the Cabinet had adopted a "violet" policy? Were they to take refuge in the theory that Lord Beaconsfield must always be subjected to a process of interpretation? Perhaps after all he had given expression amid the friendly conviviality of the Farmers' dinner, to what was not so much his sober policy, as his poetic aspiration.

Perhaps some who inclined to this view would strive to persuade themselves that a passage in which he spoke of "establishing some satisfactory relations between the Porte and its Christian subjects," was the only significant one. Or they might regard the speech as the petulant outburst of a defeated man, the mere titular head of his own Cabinet.

With this view was closely associated a belief, to which passages in the speech lent support, that the Premier's health was failing, and that his retirement was imminent, an expectation which gained in plausibility from the discrepancies which were noticed between Lord Beaconsfield's version of what had taken place and Lord Derby's.

On the other hand, if the speech was to be regarded as a serious declaration of the purpose of the Cabinet, it was clear that the Reconciliation, as far as it rested on a belief in conversion, was all a mistake; and that if Public Opinion was still convinced that Emancipation was the true policy, Public Opinion would have to continue to press the Cabinet in that direction. Whichever explanation was accepted, it seemed inevitable that the Government would be greatly discredited, and we find a widespread expectation immediately after the delivery of the speech that this result would happen.

> The country will not, we fear, find its anxiety appeased by what the Prime Minister said at Aylesbury yesterday about the Turkish policy of the Government. . . . We fear that his speech will tend to increase rather than to calm the storm of indignation against

the Porte. Lord Beaconsfield does not affect to believe that his Government is backed in this question by the country. . . The Prime Minister speaks with a negligence astonishing in so great a master of language if he does not wish his countrymen to infer that such conduct has been pursued; that the "designing politicians" have used the enthusiasm of the nation to further their own sinister ends. Does he deliberately mean to say that such is the meaning of Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet, speech, and letter? If so, it is one of the gravest charges ever made by one eminent English statesman against another. . . . The Prime Minister has nothing to retract, nothing to promise, but that the Government will try to complete what it has already begun. . . . Lord Derby will return to exactly the same position as he occupied before the Servian war by laying before the Powers the very proposals he formerly made to adjust the relations between the Porte and its Christian subjects. . . . Lord Derby's plans must not be altered out of sentimental indignation at the massacre of Batak, and the decoration of Achmet Aga. If such is the resolution of the Government, it has, we believe, somewhat misread the mind of the country. It would be desirable, nevertheless, to know the precise character of Lord Derby's scheme, but the Prime Minister offers no explanation. We are left to infer that it comes, as it well might, far short of Mr. Gladstone's proposals. . . . The Prime Minister is, however, so certain the scheme would command the assent of all wise men, that he will doubtless see the necessity of explaining it to the Deputation from the City. He will find the public in a reasonable mood, for the talk of driving the Turks out of Europe does not represent the mind even of an insignificant minority. Frank explanations would calm the public mind, but vague menaces will not.—*T.* Sept. 21st.

The *Daily News* thought: That the Premier should be pleased to regard the grand movement of the nation as an agitation conducted for party purposes, is one of the worst signs of the temper of the Government which has yet appeared. Lord Beaconsfield reveals himself as a passionate partisan of the foul and loathsome Government which the country abhors. There can be no mistake about the Prime Minister's position, and for this he deserves thanks. If he can rule, our policy will be committed to the perpetuation of that abomination which Englishmen wish to see vanish from the face of the earth. He has made his election and must stand by it. But he cannot be so infatuated as to suppose that the people of this country will be turned from their purpose because he is obstinate.—(Sept. 21st.)

[This speech, made by the official, though happily not the real representative of the country, is a national humiliation.]—*D. N.* Sept. 22nd.

That Lord Beaconsfield should feel age coming on at seventy is so likely that we could only have marvelled if it had not come to pass. It must be admitted that Her Majesty and his colleagues

have found the best possible adjustment of what was due to himself and his Party in sending him to the Upper House. But, though Lord Beaconsfield is so unreserved, and even circumstantial, in his notice of his growing infirmities, there is one which it is a simple act of friendship to remind him of. . . . The memory, and even the intellect, survive the apprehensive qualities, the nervous energy, and the moral aim. A man begins to gaze on the past, and even the present, as a somnambulist, without the power of rational action. . . . Lord Beaconsfield gives us an excellent account of the whole of the pending crisis, lacking only one thing, which, strictly speaking, is no more necessary to a narrative of facts than it is to a work of fiction, and that is, the practical application—the thing to be done.—*T.* Sept. 22nd.

What the country has a right to expect is that the Ministry which represents it abroad shall show in its official language to foreign Powers and in public utterances at home that it conducts the policy of England in conformity with the predominant principle of English public opinion. The cardinal defect of Lord Beaconsfield's speech at Aylesbury was that, so far from recognising this settled public opinion, it displayed throughout an almost audacious adherence to the favourable feeling towards Turkey which till lately prevailed.—*T.* Sept. 23rd.

Lord Beaconsfield's speech is the worst and most unexpected blow the Government could have received. . . . He has not even offered to the country the homage of so much as trying to seem in sympathy with it. He has launched against it a cynical and almost a whimsical defiance. What will his colleagues say to this tormenting bit of political caprice and mischief-making? Will Sir Stafford Northcote, who strove so anxiously to persuade Edinburgh that the Government was keenly alive to its moral responsibilities, and deeply penetrated with horror at what had happened, enjoy this practical joke of his chief's? How will Lord Salisbury, who has just recorded in dignified language an echo of Sir Stafford Northcote's feeling, tolerate this squib? How will Mr. Cross, who is the soul of good sense and good feeling? How will Lord Carnarvon, who probably feels for the Christian States of Turkey at least as keenly as Mr. Gladstone himself? This ought to be a crisis to try to the very uttermost the loyalty of Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet. . . . The country does not desire to have this matter turned into a party question. . . . If the Conservatives can, and surely they can, give full expression to the conscience of the country, that is what the country most desires. But it is not to be borne that the Prime Minister should simply make a laughing-stock of the English people's strongest and deepest convictions. And though we all hope to see this matter dealt with by Conservatives, can we longer endure to see it dealt with by a Prime Minister whose levity is so ostentatious, and whose scorn for the national opinion is so contemptuously expressed, or by the feeble and half-hearted Minister whose policy he so jocularly defends? For the last three months every speech

uttered by Lord Derby or Mr. Disraeli has been as far as we can judge almost anxiously calculated to alienate the heart of the nation, and to make Englishmen hold in the lightest possible esteem the judgment of our first Minister and of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. A climax was, however, reached at Aylesbury on Wednesday, which may lead to a salutary crisis.—*Spec.* Sept. 23rd.

It is remarkable that the actual effect of the speech was just the opposite of that which was anticipated in many quarters. Instead of at once stopping the progress of the reconciliation, and bringing about a new access of agitation, its influence was distinctly to accelerate the falling abroad of Public Opinion. In the first place, it stimulated the reaction. It encouraged the "red" notions to proclaim themselves more openly. Then again, whereas other Ministers had spoken the agitation fair, Lord Beaconsfield directly charged it with being factious, and encouraged the notion that it was something to be ashamed of, as a weakness. But chiefly it was a direct blow in the face to Public Opinion. It challenged both the correctness of its judgment and the legitimacy of its power, and it is impossible to say that the self-confidence of Public Opinion was not staggered on both points.

We must say we do not think that the country ought to be as indifferent to that speech as the statesmen so extravagantly and indecorously attacked in it are and ought to be. The habit of shrugging our shoulders and crying it is "only Dizzy" may be carried too far, when the person in question is Prime Minister, and commits the whole country by every word he utters. The speech at Aylesbury was one which recklessly challenged, and ought to have at once elicited, a grave and resolute expression of the nation's displeasure and disgust. Yet, either through the indecision and astonishment of the people, or their habitual tolerance of the great mountebank's political freaks, such an expression of indignation and disgust has certainly not as yet been drawn forth. The blow appears to have stunned the English people, who are not accustomed to receive such "punishment" at the hands of the Queen's first Minister.—*Spec.* Sept. 30th.

Fas est et ab hoste doceri . . . it may be by no means bad policy,—where you have a conviction,—to give what is called public opinion a direct blow in the face. That is what Lord Beaconsfield did on Wednesday week at Aylesbury, and though we believe that it will only result, as it ought to result, in hardening and concentrating the purpose of the country to defeat Lord Beaconsfield's caricature and degradation of Lord Palmerston's Eastern policy, it seems quite certain that its first result has been to cause a considerable collapse of presence of mind and purpose amongst the

public, whose meetings and resolutions he treated with such undisguised scorn, and whose leaders he denounced with such unreal but, at the same time, such carefully calculated indignation. There cannot be a doubt that, for the moment at least, Lord Beaconsfield's well-directed and heavy blow took the wind out of his opponent,—*i.e.* the English public. His bitterest foes became almost silent. His severest critics in the Press suddenly turned feeble. The popular meetings, instead of at once renewing the attack with a new emphasis and significance, appeared to die away. Nothing could be more marked than the difference between the effect of Lord Derby's long speech of the previous week—which was also a defiance, but one delivered in hesitating accents,—a defiance disguised as concession,—and Lord Beaconsfield's, which was a defiance delivered in the most unmistakable tone of arrogant scorn and cynical contempt. . . . What his speech conveyed was, in short, that the British public were mere babies crying for the moon, and that those who told them they could have what they were crying for, were wicked and designing men, who, for their own evil purposes, were prepared to flatter the credulity of these babies to the utmost. Even Vivian Grey's audacity could hardly have gone further. We suspect, however, that it was carefully calculated, and on the whole, we may say, if not sagaciously calculated, still acutely and shrewdly calculated for an end which for the moment it attained. . . . In this case, Lord Beaconsfield will not succeed in cowing the country into acquiescence in his views. The alienation from the pro-Turkish policy of this and previous Governments has been growing too long and too steadily amongst the best informed, as well as the superficially informed, to be conquered by any statesman's daring and scorn. Still, Lord Beaconsfield's was a well-imagined piece of audacity, which has already done something to stun, though not, we believe, to overwhelm, the force of opinion opposed to him.—*Spec.* Sept. 30th.

A new element was introduced into the situation by the shock which the Aylesbury speech gave to the confidence of Public Opinion in its own power to determine the course of the country in the last resort—that is to say in its own sovereignty. Public Opinion began to be dimly conscious that in addition to a problem in foreign affairs it might have a constitutional question to consider before long.

The earliest discussion on the theory of the constitution grew out of the demand for an autumn session. People began to consider the right of Parliament to control foreign affairs and the propriety of direct appeals to the monarch.

The avowal by Lord Beaconsfield at Aylesbury that the Government was not backed by the country, quickly followed by Lord

Derby's reply to the demand of the Guildhall deputation for an autumn session,[1] a reply which was a refusal to afford an opportunity to Parliament of exercising influence on the course of the country's diplomacy until (as Lord Derby then expected) after the event had been decided, called forth indignant protests from Mr. Lowe, comprised in letters to the *Times* and the *Daily News*. In the latter, moreover, he took the opportunity of disclaiming the policy of "washing our hands of the whole affair" which Lord Derby had attributed to him.[2]

> On the showing of the Prime Minister no opposition can be more sharp than that which exists at present between the Government and the people. How is this opposition to be reconciled? The answer of the Government is that they are to do as they like and the people are to tamely submit. . . . The confidence of the country has placed the Government in a position to thwart the dearest wishes of the country, and they can, as they propose, repay that confidence by taking advantage of the absence of Parliament to do what Parliament, if in Session, would assuredly prevent them from doing. . . . It appears to me that in so grave a conjuncture it is the duty of those whom Government admit to be the great majority of the nation—a nation not wont tamely to submit to the domination of a minority—to make a last effort by an appeal to the Crown to interpose between us and those who aspire, while acting in our name, to make us party to transactions which we repudiate. The question whether we shall or shall not adhere to our traditional policy as regards Turkey is no doubt of vast importance, but it is even more important that we should not exhibit ourselves in the sight of the world as submitting to be deprived by mere chicane of those rights of self-government which we have, it would seem, wrung from powerful Kings, but cannot wrest from Ministers the creatures of our own creation.—*Mr. Lowe* in *T.* Sept. 30th.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Gladstone has drawn an outline which in the main goes to the heart of the people of England and which they wish to see acted upon. And now, Sir, will you permit me to furnish Lord Derby with yet another reason for calling Parliament together at once, to which I challenge any one to give an answer. We had no opportunity of discussing the issues raised by the outrages in Bulgaria before Parliament rose. By the Government the letters of your excellent Correspondent were partly discredited, partly ridiculed. We have now all the facts before us. But we have more. Speaking of the negotiations now pending, the Prime Minister has said that the Government is not backed by the country. Now, if Parliament were sitting it is quite evident that the Government

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 425.

[2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 426.

must act in accordance with its wishes, dissolve, or resign. The Government is therefore taking advantage of the accident of the vacation to do that which it would not be allowed to do if Parliament were in session, and this it is doing in order to defeat what it admits to be the will and feeling of those who returned it, and by whose confidence it is enabled to openly and ostentatiously thwart their dearest wishes. Suppose an agent holds an authority to purchase stock, with secret instruction not to buy a particular kind, and suppose he buys that very kind, thus binding his principal against his will, what is the proper name for such a transaction?—*Mr. Lowe* in *D. N.* Sept. 30th.

The constitutional accuracy of Mr. Lowe's language may be doubted when he speaks of an "appeal to the Crown to interpose" between the nation and the Ministry, and, again, when he argues as if it were theoretically among the privileges of Parliament to decide questions of peace and war, or to control foreign affairs in general. The Crown can only act on the advice of the Ministry, and it is to Lord Beaconsfield and the Cabinet that Mr. Lowe's appeal must be addressed. If they felt that the country at large desired such a step, it would, no doubt, be their bounden duty to adopt it. But this decision must rest with the Ministers in the first instance, and not with the Crown. It is equally unquestionable that the issue between war and peace and the conduct of foreign negotiations are by the Constitution the prerogative of the Crown.—*T.* Sept. 30th.

We have already touched on the question of the personal action of the monarch in respect of the summoning of Parliament.[1] With respect to the other question, the qualifications which the *Times* introduces after its statement that foreign negotiations are the prerogative of the Crown show that it does not seriously mean to set up the doctrine of Foreign Office Toryism. For the rest, it deprecates the vehemence and passion which had been provoked.

Lord Beaconsfield, no doubt, was sufficiently audacious at Aylesbury, but he was not so reckless as to say anything which can be fairly assumed to mean that "no opposition can be more sharp than that which exists at present between the Government and the people."

[If the Government contemplated steps requiring supply, Mr. Lowe's demand would be unanswerable. Further, if the Ministry were placed] in a position in which, directly or indirectly, they had to pledge England to a decision involving ulterior action, it would be their duty to consult Parliament. [Even in a case where by remaining passive England could practically determine the result of the struggle, though the Ministry would not be under any

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 12.

direct necessity to appeal to the House of Commons for support, they would certainly be bound morally to take the opinion of Parliament.] . . . The country will not hastily share Mr. Lowe's apprehension that the determination of the Government is "to do as they like," and "the people are to tamely submit." No Government composed of practical men can reasonably be expected in these days to attempt anything so wild, and even, we may say, so impossible. If the country at large were really convinced that the Ministry were taking such a course, a storm would arise before which, whether Parliament were sitting or not, they would have to succumb immediately.—*T.* Sept. 30th.

We require better evidence of an "overwhelming national demand" than is furnished by the utterances of three or four distinguished politicians out of office, the outcry of a handful of notoriety-hunting busybodies, and the "I dare not" and "I would" of a journal which has completely "boxed the compass" on the Eastern Question within the last month. . . . But even if there had been, or if there were now, any general urgency of demand for a change of policy, and for an autumn session to bring about the change, we must protest against Mr. Lowe's tacit assumption that it would have been the duty of the Government at once to give way to it. Does he pretend that the general and well-recognised duty of a Constitutional Government to submit to the national will includes the duty of yielding without a struggle to an outburst of national passion? It will be an evil day for this country when such a theory comes to be universally accepted. We hope and believe that no such theory is accepted yet. It is the duty of the Government even when Parliament is sitting, and tenfold more their duty when Parliament is prorogued, to consider whether a "national demand" which springs up in the manner in which Mr. Lowe supposes this to have arisen, represents the well-considered judgment of the nation or merely a transient mood of excitement, originating in a natural and worthy sentiment and worked upon by unworthy means. It is *not* their duty to allow themselves to be overborne by such a movement without stopping to consider this.—*P. M. G.* Sept. 30th.

The *Standard*, while putting forward the objection that the powers of Parliament do not extend to peace and war, at the same time says if Ministers had done what is imputed to them, if they had refused to call Parliament together when the country is against them, they would be worthy of impeachment.—(Oct. 2nd.)

When Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone successively resigned office, not in obedience to an adverse vote of Parliament, but on a computation of the party results of a general election, and while as yet Parliament had not met, a new precedent was made and followed. . . . We doubt whether there was sufficient reason in 1868 and 1874 for departure from the ordinary usage; but the instances prove that precedent will not be allowed to stand in the way of public convenience, and still less of a great national

necessity. The doctrine that the control of foreign policy, and of a foreign policy involving the issue of peace or war, does not belong to Parliament, and through Parliament to the nation, is a part of the antiquities of the Constitution, like the theoretic right of the Sovereign to dismiss his Ministers independently of any vote of the House of Commons. If the doctrine that Ministers owe only a responsibility after the fact to a Parliament which they may first keep in the dark, and afterwards refuse to call together till the mischief is done, were to be acted upon, it would be necessary to find some other means of controlling the Executive. A direct national address to the Crown to dismiss its Ministers, to call Parliament together, or to appeal to the country by a general election might become necessary. If one rusty weapon is drawn out of the armoury, we may have to take down another from the wall on which it has so long hung unused. Lord Beaconsfield's admission that the Government has not the support of the country in its Eastern policy becomes more dangerous than ever when it is generalised into the assertion that in the theory of the Constitution Parliament has nothing to do with the control of foreign policy. If this be so, the nation must act through some other organisation than that of Parliament—a very mischievous doctrine to force on the public mind. If Parliament cannot decide the question of war or peace, the nation must decide it, and enforce its decision as it can.—*D. N.* Oct. 2nd.

In declining to summon Parliament for an autumn, or as it might more properly be called a winter, Session, the Government have, we believe, determined to take no step during the recess which shall commit the country to a course which it might not approve, and yet which, on the meeting of Parliament, it might be powerless to undo. This determination shows a far truer understanding of the Constitution as it is, and of the obligations imposed on those who administer it, than the pedantic maxim that affairs of war and peace and the conduct of foreign policy are not subject to the control of Parliament, but fall within the unfettered discretion of the Crown and its advisers, subject, of course, to censure, which would be improbable, and to punishment, which would be practically impossible when the mischief was done.—*D. N.* Oct. 20th.

§ 4. *How the Question became a Party One.*

In our survey of the cross-currents or disturbing influences which operated during the Reconciliation Period to break up the simplicity of Public Opinion, we find that one of the most important was the influence of Party.

From another point of view we may regard the controversy about the Eastern Question as a disturbing cause, which threatened to break the continuity of parties themselves, and to throw them

into a state of partial solution, so that when the party creeds crystallised again they had taken up some new elements. Or, again, it was as if a powerful magnet had been brought near a mariner's compass. For a moment the attraction of party had been unable altogether to resist the more powerful attraction or repulsion of the "violet" policy. But the weaker attraction was the more permanent one. After a time the traditional polarity of party reasserted its sway. But the permanent magnetic pole, so to speak, had been slightly shifted by the temporary disturbing force. From whichever point of view we approach it, we are brought to the consideration of the attitude of the two historical parties to the "red" and "violet" policies respectively.

A new question was suddenly flung into the party arena. A vast preponderance of opinion inclined to the "violet" notions. The Liberal party did not claim for Liberalism the exclusive title to the ideas that now became popular, or seek to show that Conservative principles were incompatible with them. The most that was ever done in this direction was to point out that the support of Whigs might fairly be claimed for the policy of Emancipation, on the strength of the old Whig watchword, "civil and religious liberty all the world over," and to hint that the Conservatives, as a party, had not been favourable to the cause of freedom on the Continent.[1] On the other hand, it was strenuously insisted that to adopt the "violet" policy would not only be a completely new departure for the Liberal party, whose traditional policy on this point was that of the Crimean War, but that it was somewhat unfair that Liberals should oppose a Conservative Minister in carrying out a "red" policy.

> The Crimean War stands in exactly the same relation to the present Liberals as the Revolution of 1688 to the old Whigs; they are answerable for that or for nothing. . . . The war was in truth a Liberal war; it was the fruit of accumulated Liberal antipathy to the Prince who had contemptuously opposed every single experiment in constitutional government throughout Europe. . . . It is a scandal and a shame that public men like Mr. Gladstone and the Duke of Argyll should come forward, with cynical disregard of their own antecedents, to revile the Government to whom they have bequeathed a host of embarrassments for so much as hesitating to undo their own work and for so much as a momentary scepticism as to the evidence of its worthlessness.—*P. M. G.* Oct. 3rd.

[1] Compare Mr. Evelyn Ashley's speech, *H. of C.* Aug. 11th, *ante*, vol. i. p. 371.

> If the Liberal party should really again consent to be led by Mr. Gladstone, there is, of course, no question of its having to break with history. It severs its connection not only with the Whigs of 1688 but with the Liberals of 1854.—*P. M. G.* Nov. 4th.

The Ministry did not come into power to oppose, nor had the Opposition been organised to, give effect to the policy which was now demanded by Public Opinion. Nor was there the faintest logical connection between Conservatism and a "red" policy. If the official Conservatives seemed in no hurry to adopt the "violet" policy, no one could say that it was an article of the traditional Liberal creed. It was regarded as equally open to either of the historical parties having regard to their traditions and antecedents. Just as the Foreign Secretary in years gone by[1] had professed himself unable to understand—not the position of the Liberal statesmen, but of the *elder* statesmen in general—with respect to the Eastern Question, so now people were willing to regard the "red" policy not so much as the special policy of either party, but rather as a taint of officialism, inherent, perhaps, in the walls of the Foreign Office, with which any denizen of it would, until the place should be purified, as a matter of course be infected.

The Bishop of Manchester, in a letter read at the Rochdale meeting, says:

> Politicians and statesmen of both sides seem ready to answer the question, whether we shall continue to support the Ottoman Empire in the affirmative. . . . A member of the late Administration [alluding to Mr. Grant Duff] writing in the current number of the *Contemporary Review*, with that *sang-froid* with which officialism seems to clothe a man, says plainly, "Any indulgence of enthusiasm on either side would be miserably out of place." I question if language of this kind will find acceptance with the mass of intelligent Englishmen.—*Bishop of Manchester.* See *D. N.* Sept. 5th.

Nevertheless, we find that when people finally ranged themselves on this question they kept very closely to the old party lines. There were exceptions, of course; but speaking broadly, Liberals were for the "violet" and Conservatives for the "red" policy. The party creeds seemed to have undergone a serious modification, and their personal constitution very little. Thus it is one of the features of the back eddy of the Reconciliation Period that the question now becomes a party one.

How did this result come about? The agitation was in

[1] Lord Stanley at Lynn, *ante*, vol. i. p. 204.

its inception entirely outside the ordinary methods appropriate to party government. According to that theory, when Public Opinion is divided on any subject, it should look to the two historical parties, and it will find one party taking one side and the other the other, each with its leader ready to form a Cabinet and to carry out the policy it has espoused so soon as the predominating opinion shall have declared itself through Parliament in favour of one or the other. But in the special circumstances of this case it was thought that the ordinary constitutional practice, viz. that a new policy can only be had by putting the men in power who have advocated it in Opposition, and who will carry it out in office, did not apply. The agitation was an attempt of Public Opinion to influence the course of the Executive *directly* without the intervention of Parliament or a change of Ministry. It was an attempt to change the *policy* and not the *personnel* of the Government. Its watchword was essentially, "Measures, not men."

Thus, as in Parliament, so out of doors, the first effort was not to effect a change of Government, but rather to help the existing Government to shake itself free from a discredited policy. A *locus pœnitentiæ* was freely offered, even to those who had to a certain extent become personally identified with the "red" policy. It seems to have been considered that the understanding by which a Minister ought to give place to another, rather than carry out the reversal of his own policy, did not apply so strictly in a matter of foreign affairs as to home politics.

The utmost care was taken to distinguish between the Conservative party and the Ministry as a whole, on the one hand, and *individuals* who were supposed to be wedded to the "red" policy, on the other. Many people clung to the hypothesis that there were no such persons, that not even Lord Beaconsfield's preference for the "red" policy was irrevocable. If his resignation was called for it was only when there seemed no hope of his predilection being overcome.

> Nothing can protect these unhappy people except the autonomy of Bulgaria, and this autonomy will be steadfastly resisted by the British Government, or rather by those members of it who are responsible for foreign affairs. They have only to signify in conference, or by a communication to Count Schouvaloff, that they approve this settlement, and its adoption is certain, as certain as that they will do nothing of the kind. It is . . . they . . . who, if Englishmen are serious in their resolution to cause these barbarities to cease, must first be driven from power. There

is no necessity that their party should be driven also. We can trust the majority of Tories, when once fully aware of the truth, to do justice upon Turkey almost as fully as the majority of Liberals, but it is impossible to feel that confidence in a man that meets such narratives as were placed before him with a jeer; . . . and Lord Derby is entirely in his hands.—*Spec.* Sept. 2nd.

Though the ordinary and natural result of Mr. Disraeli's reckless policy and heartless speeches might be, if Parliament were sitting, that Lord Beaconsfield at least might be compelled to quit the Government, and to give up the reins to somemore worthy Conservative colleague, for the present at least this is impossible. We all know that until a new session of Parliament is summoned there is no constitutional mode of getting rid of an unworthy Prime Minister . . . It would not be the English way of doing things to insist on any personal retribution, if, in the meantime, public opinion could induce that Prime Minister thoroughly to change his course, and to undo, as far as may be now in his power, the evil which he has done. . . . The British Government must be driven, if it cannot be led, . . . Liberals and Conservatives working together for this common end. Of course, in a sense this involves a very severe attack on the Government, for it is an invitation to the Government to abjure all it has hitherto done, and do all that it has hitherto opposed. But it does not involve a party attack. If it succeeds, it will be through the honest working of the Conservative conscience, and will result, not in driving the Conservatives from power, but in seating them more firmly, with certain probable and very important modifications, no doubt, in it. The chief champion of the Turks may ultimately have to go, but the principles of Conservatism are not bound up with the Koran, nor does their popularity depend on the slender thread of Lord Beaconsfield's official life.—*Spec.* Sept. 9th.

And again, on September 30th, the *Spectator* says:—

If the Conservative Government will frankly accept this one condition, by all means let them remain in office. If they will not frankly accept this one condition, the Liberal party will have no choice but to labour with all their might to turn them out of office. It may take a long and up-hill fight to achieve this, but it is a fight that at all costs and at all hazards will have to be entered upon. As Mr. Gladstone said the other day, we do not want to use the Liberal party as an instrument with which to shape the national policy unless we are forced to do so. We prefer that the national policy should continue to be shaped by Conservative hands, if only they will shape it in the right way. But if they insist on shaping it in the wrong way, we must use the Liberal party, not as the best instrument for the purpose, but as the only instrument. That Lord Beaconsfield should consent to read his speech at Aylesbury backwards is not, perhaps, to be looked for, but he has himself told us that his original intention

was to have laid down the leadership of the Conservative party at the same time that he laid down the leadership of the House of Commons. Under these circumstances, such a reconstruction of the Ministry as would place at its head a Conservative in whose action in this matter the country would feel confidence, would imply no revolutionary change.

Thus, considered as a matter of procedure, the Agitation was an attempt of Public Opinion to assert its sovereignty independently of the machinery of Party.

The promoters of the meetings were anxious to make them representative of both parties, and above all to secure the attendance and support of Conservatives. And in fact there were a considerable number of Conservatives, members of Parliament and others, who fairly identified themselves with the Agitation during the first half of September, and who were not slack in pressing a "violet" policy upon the Government. Sir Stafford Northcote's speech at Edinburgh, where he told his audience of professedly Conservative working men, that the Agitation might strengthen the hands of the Government, and that to drive the Turks out of Europe would be agreeable to the feelings of every one,[1] bears witness to the fact that the Government was conscious that the pressure upon them was coming from supporters and from opponents alike.

Looking at the first effect on the state of parties of the concentration of Public Opinion on the Eastern Question, it appears that it tended to make each of them fall into two sections: those who supported the Agitation and those who thought it altogether mischievous, or at least mischievous the moment it lost its purely philanthropic and emotional aspect. Very few Liberals belonged to the latter class—a considerable number of Conservatives belonged to the former.

It would be a mistake to suppose that all of those who did not approve of the Agitation were, to begin with, in favour of a definite "red" policy. A great many acted thus from a point of view approximating to "Foreign Office Toryism," some thinking that the matter was not one for Public Opinion, and that the executive Government ought not to be interfered with at a critical juncture, others being content to surrender their judgments to Lord Derby. But among those who did not unite in the Agitation there was also a distinctly "red" section. After Lord Beaconsfield's Aylesbury speech, and still more after the notion "anti-Russism" had been

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 418.

reinvigorated by the events shortly to be described, this section raised its head into some prominence.

It was said at the time of the earlier meetings, that the only difference observable between a Liberal and a Conservative was that the one said "his blood boiled," and the other that it "ran cold in his veins;" but this haphazard generalisation corresponded to some extent to a real difference. The men whose blood ran cold were willing enough to pour out their execrations on the Bashi-Bazouks, or to subscribe for the sufferers, but when it came to pressing a policy upon the Government, there was a tendency to hang back, lest they should be embarrassing them.

It was not hostility to the "violet" policy, so much as a desire to follow their party leaders and not to embarrass the Cabinet, either in their negotiations abroad or in their party conflict at home, that accounts for a certain lukewarmness in a section of the Conservatives towards the Agitation. To overcome this latter scruple Liberals were almost abject sometimes in their anxiety to repudiate any party advantage capable of being derived from the matter. It was as if they were ready to bargain that if Conservatives would join with them in pressing a "violet" policy on Lord Derby, they, for themselves and their party, willingly took all blame of past insensibility to the wrongs of the Provincials, and for the future renounced any advantage or merit there might be in redressing them. For a time these efforts to induce Conservatives to join in urging a change of policy upon the Conservative Government were not wholly unsuccessful, but their continued success manifestly depended upon keeping the question outside the range of party conflict.

> We note with pleasure that some leading Conservatives are pressing on the Government in the same direction, though abstaining of course from all direct blame of Lord Derby. The Marquis of Bath's speech at Frome on Wednesday amounted to a very heavy indictment against Lord Beaconsfield. The tone of the Radical speakers has not always been so good; Mr. E. A. Leatham, for instance, turned his speech on this great question into a mere party tirade,—clever, of course, Mr. Leatham is always clever,—but thoroughly unsuitable to a moment of such danger and suspense.—*Spec.* Sept. 30th.

Again, the *Spectator* suggests that—

> Some Liberals may say, Is not this repudiation on behalf of the movement of any party character, a foolish throwing away of opportunities? The Conservatives have stumbled on an unforeseen

> difficulty—why should not the chance be improved? [The *Spectator* sets out a number of reasons why this course should not be pursued, one being, that in the coming negotiations, a united nation and a character for resolution would be required. The weak side of the last Liberal Government was its foreign policy.] All these considerations point to the same conclusion,—the importance of dissociating the present movement from party politics. . . . . This of course is said in strict subjection to one essential proviso: party politics must be kept out of this agitation, unless the refusal of the Government to abandon their policy makes it impossible to attain the end we have in view without having recourse to party politics.—(Sept. 30th.)

The belief that it was possible to keep clear of the party conflict is shown by the anxiety for the meeting of Parliament, although it was well known that on any strictly party question Ministers could command a large majority. And it is significant that the *Times* was in favour of the extra-constitutional method of influencing the Executive without the intervention of Parliament, on the ground that if Parliament met, it would be much more difficult to avoid falling into strict party lines.[1]

With the incipient reconciliation, the accusations which from the first had been brought against the Agitation, showed a slight tendency to subside. But they soon revived again.

The Conservative Press began to insist upon the doctrine, that party considerations should be put aside at this grave crisis of foreign affairs. This might appear to be exactly what the supporters of the Agitation were aiming at, and in one sense so it was, but the underlying meanings were very different. On the one hand the supporters of the Agitation cried "No Party," as defining the basis of their action; in their mouths it meant that the Government were to be controlled by Public Opinion, acting outside the ordinary *party* lines, under the peculiar circumstances of this peculiar case. On the other hand, the opponents cried "No Party," as a charge against the Agitation; in their mouths it meant that the Government was not to be controlled in this matter at all. In the accusations that the promoters of the Agitation were improperly making party capital out of a foreign difficulty, "Foreign Office Toryism"[2] makes its appearance.

> In our comments upon the agitation which has arisen out of the "Bulgarian atrocities" and the present position of the Eastern problem, we have set party considerations on one side, and kept

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 18.

[2] *Ante*, vol. i. chap. iii. § 7.

in view those national interests which are immeasurably more important. There is no rule of right politics so salutary or fundamental as that of maintaining unity in public opinion upon great foreign questions within the limits of propriety. In nothing which affects the destiny of an Empire is the maxim so true that a house divided against itself cannot stand.—*D. T.* Sept. 16th.

To make party capital out of foreign policy is of all political resources the one to be most jealously watched. Domestic questions are common property, and turn on common knowledge; but the diplomatic relations of a great Empire want special study and serious handling; nor can they, without the greatest danger, be dealt with on the platform of vestry halls or in provincial and city meetings. Not only can the full and exact facts never be before the assemblies which debate them; not only must the most important explanations remain unspoken, and the most delicate points be constantly veiled; but though all were known that Ministers know, there remains need for trained minds to comprehend the past and future of diplomatic changes; and what the prevailing ignorance is, even among practised politicians, on this Eastern question, the public has lately witnessed for itself. It is our high reward to-day that, in returning, as we hope, to practical agreement and harmony with all reasonable Liberals upon the basis of approaching peace and large administrative reforms, we have usefully held the common weal above party spirit, and serviceably repressed the selfish side of a noble and fruitful impulse. The true constitutional course in such a crisis as that which may now be regarded as passing away is to commit the foreign affairs of the country to those responsible for them. If they manage well, the people must support and honour them; if ill, there is always time enough to condemn and replace them when the facts are known, and when the policy pursued can be properly explained and justly criticised. No Cabinet can ever tie the hands of England, or commit her puissance beyond reach of the free will of those who confer executive authority and recall it; but to hamper an honest Government while doing its best may indeed compromise both the present and the future.—*D. T.* Sept. 27th.

It is worth noticing that the coming to the front of this form of Toryism is closely connected with an attempt to discredit party government. We notice, moreover, what at first seems a paradox, namely, that it was precisely the accusation "Party" born of Foreign Office Toryism, that did more than anything else to produce a party struggle. To parody the lines in "Rejected Addresses":—

He who for party's sake "No parties" hoots
Is apt to make the faction he imputes.

The way in which the argument was framed is curious; it exhibits an inability, or perhaps an unwillingness, to distinguish between a question of policy and that strife between parties which in England, under ordinary circumstances, is the normal and proper way of deciding such a question; it rests upon the fallacy of confusing politics, generally, with the tactics of attack and defence upon party lines. Thus, the upholders of this position, in the first place, sought to prevent people from talking politics because party politics were tabooed, and then insisted that whoever talked politics must, from the nature of the case, be engaging in the party war.

The promoters of the Agitation had a distinctly political end in view; but this end they sought to compass without the aid of the machinery of *party*. They were met—especially when they had occasion to speak with disapproval of the course which Lord Derby or Lord Beaconsfield had in fact pursued—with the cry "No politics." This was a double-barrelled objection. On the one hand it was an attempt to confine the Agitation to its purely benevolent function, and again it carried with it the charge that those who opposed Ministers on a point of foreign affairs were attacking them with unlawful weapons and on an unlawful occasion.

The *Spectator* says:—

> Opposite answers, both in good faith, are given to the question whether the agitation has been perverted to party ends. They argue that the severe criticism of the Government policy in this case is perfectly consistent with the want of party character. These meetings in every part of the country would be without excuse if their object was only to *solicit* subscriptions or to express an abstract dislike of oppression. They are justifiable because they have a precise and definite object, and we repeat that inasmuch as this object is not the overthrow of the Conservative Government, but the modification of the Conservative policy, it is in no sense a party object.—(Sept. 30th.)

> It happened to me some years back, when sitting as a magistrate in petty sessions, to have to examine two witnesses, who each had to give an account of a certain conversation. One witness described it thus, "They began to talk politics, putting questions to him which he could not answer." The other witness, describing the same conversation, said, "They began to talk about the rise of the world, and Adam and Eve." The definition of "politics" which is here implied has often been brought to my mind since that day. . . . I think that the man who looked on a discourse about "the rise of the world, and Adam and Eve," as

coming under the head of "politics" showed a keen sense of what politics really are. A conversation about the rise of the world would be very apt to pass into theological discussion, and theological discussion is very apt to pass into more strictly political discussion. . . . Every political question is a question of our duty as a nation; it is, therefore, a moral question. But there are minds which seem unable to take this view of politics. To them "politics" are simply a matter of little tricks and schemes to get one set of men into power, and to keep another set of men out of power. Such tricks and schemes are not politics, but the mere accidents of politics. . . . [A man who praises or blames certain measures because they are the work of a certain set of men, which measures he would not praise or blame if they were the work of a certain other set of men, sacrifices national duty to party interest. It is a strange deduction from this rule when men argue that, at a great national crisis, a man must forbear from blaming acts of his political opponents though he condemns them, or from praising acts of his political friends though he approves them.] This last is, in fact, what we are asked to do by those who charge us with dragging in party politics into the great question of Eastern Europe, with trying to make "political capital," as the pet phrase is, out of the evil deeds of the Turks, and out of the sufferings of the Christians. The rule laid down seems to be this. Because I am a Liberal I may not blame Lord Derby, or Lord Beaconsfield; I may not do honour to Mr. Gladstone, or the Duke of Argyll. So to do is "politics," "party politics." If I choose, as I sometimes have to do, to blame the action of a Liberal, or to praise the action of a Conservative, that I may do and welcome; but I must not do anything the other way. In a speech the other day I had to blame both Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell; no Liberal objected. The moment I began to blame Lord Derby, a Tory shouted, "No politics." . . . In short, this cry of "No politics," "Don't make political capital," a cry which has misled many very good men and even some good Liberals, is a mere party dodge on the Tory or Turkish side. . . . [Again] because I put forth conclusions which, formed more than twenty years ago, have been strengthened tenfold by the experience of the last twenty years, I am called all manner of names, among which the glorious name of "philanthropist" seems to be used as the lowest expression of contempt. That is to say, I am talking politics; I am putting questions to them which they cannot answer.—*Mr. E. A. Freeman* in *D. N.* Sept. 28th.[1]

When the meetings began, nothing could be more distinct or more general than the understanding that they were not to be gatherings of partisans. A great part of the nation had been shocked by the elaborate narratives of the cruelties committed by the Turkish irregular troops; there had not yet been time to draw those inferences from them on which men at once began to differ.

[1] Letter entitled "No Politics."

> The question was to be, as one of the patrons of the agitation in its decay still calls it, a question not of politics but of morals. Conservatives were to be as welcome as Liberals to say that they abhorred slaughter of men and outrages on women; and the invitations to them were the more cordial because there was not the smallest reason for supposing the feeling of the country as to the relative merits of its public men had changed one iota since the last general election. There were some of the agitators, no doubt, who counted from the very first on obtaining through the movement a great advantage for the political party in opposition; and as the agitation went on it became daily clearer that its threads were held by well-known adversaries of the Government in power. The first public avowal of its true character was made by Mr. Gladstone, when he stated that, as party organisation was believed to exist for good, it would be absurd not to use it for a good purpose.—*P. M. G.* Nov. 4th.

We may perhaps say that the first stage in the process of the repolarisation of opinion along party lines was reached when it became apparent that there were many Conservatives who gave but a lukewarm support to the Agitation, because they feared to embarrass the Conservative Cabinet.

A second stage is marked by the intimation of Mr. Gladstone that the Liberals were prepared to adopt the "violet" policy in their party programme, if it was not accepted as a national policy about which there was no party division. The party in power had the first opportunity of carrying it out as a national policy; but if they refused the opportunity, then the Liberals would take it up, and make the policy their own.

> I will say one thing with regard to this Eastern Question, and that is upon its relations to the state of political parties in this country; because it is very curious to perceive the present remarkable, and, so far as I know, unexampled state of public feeling—(hear)—for never in my life have I known a movement of this kind, which has grown, as it were, without stimulus or without excitement. (Loud applause.) Let me say, gentlemen, if the Liberal party is at all to blame with regard to its bearing in the past Session of Parliament, it is to blame for its silence and inaction. (Loud cheers.) . . . I want to ask what the Liberal party is? The Liberal party is, I believe, an instrument—I do not say it is so in the belief of our opponents—for doing good. (Loud applause.) . . . Are we to place ourselves in the position of forswearing and renouncing the instrument, and not say a single word about it? (Cheers.) In my opinion, if there is blame it is that there is too great reluctance, too great reserve, too great tardiness, in associating this great question with the feeling of the party which we know to be unanimously engaged in its favour.

(Loud cheers.) I have moved a great deal about England within the last few weeks, and come into contact with many thousands of men, and I have only found one single Liberal—and I hold up my finger for him—(laughter)—I have only found, I say, one single Liberal who was not heart and soul associated with this great national movement.[1] (Loud cheers.) . . . I think we have given very fair terms to our opponents. What we have said to them—and I am quite sure we have cause for what we have said—is: "There must be a change of policy; if you are really desirous that there should be no change of Government you will have to do your duty. (Loud and prolonged cheering.) We cannot stand the continuance of your policy on this question. That policy must go to the wall and go to the winds. (Renewed cheering.) We do not want you to go the wall and go to the winds; but, if you will not change the policy, to the winds and to the wall you must go." (Protracted cheers.) That is the long and the short of it. (Renewed cheers.) If I meet a Conservative friend, and my friend says to me, "It is very unfair for you to turn this subject to the uses of party," my answer is that his policy is clear, and I say, "My dear friend, if you want to prevent the Liberal party deriving advantage as a party from the fact that a great question has arisen upon which we as Liberals are unanimous—(applause)—and upon which three-fourths of your side agree with them, whether they say it or not, your course is plain." . . . [If the Conservatives] want to make the movement in a party point of view innocent, let them place themselves at the head of it. (Cheers.) Let it be recorded of them that they have changed their attitude, and in a manly and leading degree promote what is desired, and we shall not object. (Applause.) . . . Let their party take up the question with the same earnestness, the same enthusiasm, the same disposition—(cheers)—look straight to the end, and go straight towards it—(renewed cheering)—and then they will take the wind completely out of our sails—(laughter and cheers); and I do say for one—speaking for myself—and I may, I feel sure, say the same for the Liberal party, that if they take this course, I should be glad of it and perfectly content with it. (Cheers.) For what I do desire—and I say it most emphatically—is that the thing that is just shall be done. (Cheers.) But of all other things what would delight me most, is that it should be done by the unanimous action of this great nation. (Loud and prolonged applause.)—*Mr. Gladstone at Staindrop, D. T.* Sept. 25th.

The *Times*, commenting on this speech, contends that the circumstances of the case are still such that the question should not be suffered to drift upon Party lines.

[1] The "London Correspondent" of the *South Wales Daily News* (Oct. 14th) notes that it is stated that "the one Liberal" not endorsing Mr. Gladstone's policy is Mr. Grant Duff.

No one would go such a length of absurdity as to say, for instance, that if the Minister of the day is grossly mismanaging a great question of foreign affairs, it is not the duty of the Leader of the Opposition to do his utmost to defeat him, and, consequently, to take his place. That consequence follows from the most elementary and vital law of our Party organisation. The first duty of a Party and of its leaders is to be prepared to act, to be ready to accept the responsibility of their criticism, and to carry on the Government when they have discredited and defeated their opponents. It is the recognition of this responsibility which prevents Party spirit from becoming mere faction and which imposes constant reserve and moderation on Party Leaders. . . . The difficulty does not lie in these general statements, but in the degree and manner of their application. It may be unquestionably true that it is absurd to forswear and renounce Party organisation in this matter, but equally true that it is possible to call that organisation into play prematurely or impatiently, and thus to do more harm than good to the very object in view.—*T.* Sept. 26*th*.

The rest of the article may be taken as an exposition of the doctrine generally accepted as applicable to our system of government, with regard to the relation of Party organisation to foreign affairs. After laying down the principle of greater reserve[1] in foreign as compared with home affairs, the article continues:—

It may be safely said, however, that there is one purpose to which Party organisation may be safely put in such cases, and which should always precede any attempt to employ it for ulterior objects. That purpose is the definite ascertainment of the opinion of the nation on the main principles of the national policy. Party organisation, if judiciously used, can do this, and it can be effectually done in no other way. Englishmen in their political life are not a mass of separate units, only combined for the purposes of an occasional election. That is the condition, to a great extent, of the French, and is the secret of the weakness of French electors in presence of the Government of the day or of any other well-organised force. But in every English town and county there are local leaders and managers under whom it is the habit of the rest to act, and if public meetings are to be called and opinions expressed, these leaders are expected to give the word of command. . . . It is thus in the power of the Party leaders to call, as it were, the people together, in the one camp, and in the other camp, and to take their opinions. If the result is to show a vital difference of opinion, it may be the duty of the Opposition to strain every nerve to obtain command of public affairs. But if the opinions of the two camps prove to be, for practical purposes, very nearly the same —and we fully believe, whatever some party organs and blind partisans may say, they are the same in the present case—it then

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 66.

becomes the unquestionable duty of a patriotic statesman to abstain from a party contest, and to do his utmost to enable the Ministry to present the result to Europe as the unanimous opinion of England. Of course, in any such crisis, there will be small, bitter, or selfish politicians on both sides who will seize the opportunity to strike a blow against their opponents, whether in season or out of season. But this will never be the general conduct of the members of English parties, and upon the whole this has not been their conduct on the present occasion. But if such be the duty of the Opposition, the corresponding duty of the Ministry of the day is no less plain. It is for them to accept a decision which is that of their own supporters as well as of their opponents, and make it plain to the country and to Europe that they intend to act upon it.—*T.* Sept. 26th.

But it became plainer day by day that the Conservative leaders were not taking up the position at the head of the movement which was offered them. Among other things this is shown by a change of tone in the Conservative Press towards the Reconciliation. At first they represented it rather as a discovery by the people that Government had after all been all along working in the direction which (putting aside some exaggerated and rhetorical demands) Public Opinion demanded. But not long after the Aylesbury speech we find a different tone supervening. There is now no longer so much care to minimise the distance between the Government and the "violet" demands. The Reconciliation is now no longer a discovery by Public Opinion that it had misapprehended the position of the Cabinet—(far less, of course, a *conversion* of the Government)—but a repentance, a recantation on the part of Public Opinion.

It was almost impossible for those party politicians who trusted to the *tone* of the Conservative Press for the hint as to what course would be agreeable to the party leaders, to believe that they were strengthening the hands of their leaders in pressing for a "violet" policy; yet there were some Conservatives who continued to believe in the conversion of the Cabinet, and who regarded the invincible fondness of the Conservative newspapers for the Turkish cause as perverse and stupid, from a mere party point of view, and even disastrous, as it was evidently tending to lead the party wrong.

Thus, at a dinner of the Frome Agricultural Society,

The Marquis of Bath asked his auditors to consider the position of the Government, and in doing so begged them not to look upon that as a party question. They neither wished that to be the scene of a political duel between Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beacons-

field nor a means of strengthening or weakening the Government. They had a clear object which they wished carried through, apart from any other consideration. [He repudiated the charges which some of the supporters of the agitation made against the Government.] The facts, so far as they knew them, proved that the Government had obtained for the Servians an armistice; had insisted that Servia should suffer neither in territory nor in independence on account of her defeats; and now they were taking measures for securing due protection to the Christian subjects of the Porte, and seemed, above all, to be working in cordial harmony with Russia. Some colour had, unfortunately, been given to that charge by the extreme indiscretion of supporters of the Government, in the Press or elsewhere. Denunciations of the Turks had been treated as attacks on the Government. The Bulgarian horrors had been first denied, then palliated, as if English and not Turkish Ministers were responsible for them. . . . What was demanded was that the Christian population in the provinces of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, should have administrative independence, that the taxation or tribute be moderate and fixed beforehand, that they should be free both of the Turkish people and Turkish authorities, and that the rulers set over them should be neither Turks nor Christians dependent on the Turkish Government. Those were the demands of almost all men, the only difference being between those who asserted and those who denied the intention of the Government to carry them out. They were all—Whig and Tory, Churchmen and Nonconformists—unanimous in that demand. Without departing from a single principle he had held to all his life, he found he could stand there on a common ground with the most extreme and consistent Liberal. The sympathies engendered in behalf of a common Christianity, of a common humanity, rose superior to all the ties and obligations, all the associations and traditions of party.—*Report in D. N.* Sept. 30th.

Again, at a dinner of the Warminster Farmers' Club, the Marquis of Bath said:—

They heard that the agitation had been got up for party purposes. If there was a partisan in that room it was himself, for all his life he had acted for party purposes. He spoke not only for himself but for others. When he spoke at Frome he thought he was not alone, and many for whom he had the most profound respect had since assured him that he was not. He spoke at that time for a particular purpose—to strengthen the hands of the Ministry in a particular direction. The movement on that subject, he contended, had been got up in no sense as a party movement, or for party purposes; but it had very much fallen into party hands (hear, hear), and had since been made use of for party purposes, and one of the reasons for it had been the idiotic conduct of the Conservative Press. For months and months they could not read the *Globe* or the *Standard* without meeting with page after page of fulsome eulogy respecting the Turks and palliation

> of their atrocities in Bulgaria. If they said that movement had been got up for party purposes he entirely denied it. (Applause.) It was a spontaneous and generous movement on the part of the people of England, which deserved all possible respect. . . . If there had been no public meetings the Government might have said, "Our hands are tied; we cannot go against the public feeling in England, which has always flowed strongly in favour of Turkey; therefore, it is not safe for us to take measures for the protection of the Christians in Turkey; we can do them no good." But the Government's hands had been strengthened by those meetings and expressions of opinion. If the policy of the Government had been to do the least that was possible for the Christians in Turkey, which it was not, but to prevent their grievances recurring, then those meetings would be embarrassing to the Government; but if the Government had been trying to force Turkey to terms, in conjunction with the other Great Powers, then the expression of opinion at those meetings could only have strengthened their hands and given them support.—*Report in T.* Oct. 9th.

However, those who held with Lord Bath that the Agitation was calculated to strengthen the hands of the Government in the approaching negotiations, were in a minority. Thus a third stage in the process was reached when those Conservatives who had taken a prominent part in the Agitation seceded from it, and surrendered their private judgment to the infallibility of Lord Derby; an infallibility which somehow, as events unfolded themselves, found itself transferred to Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury. The action of Mr. Hubbard after the City of London deputation to Lord Derby on September 27th, may be taken as typical of the secession of which we have just spoken.[1]

Thus partly by surrendering their judgment, partly by a belief that the Government was doing what they wanted, the great body of those Conservatives who had originally been in favour of a "violet" policy, was rallied to the Government, and the gradual development of the pro-Turkish policy of the Government failed to alienate them again.

However, there were some who still adhered to their demands for a thorough and explicit "violet" policy.

The Marquis of Bath must be considered the chief representative of this section, which included an influential body of High Churchmen who warmly espoused the cause of the adherents of the Eastern Church.[2] These last were not all Conservatives; but

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 427.

[2] Compare the *P. M. G.* "Imaginary Soliloquy of the Rev. Orient Churchward," *post*, § 7.

many of them were, and these delighted to recognise in Lord Salisbury the hero who was to be the worthy champion of Christendom.

Turning now to the Liberal party, something like a schism became apparent in their ranks soon after the Reconciliation Period had set in. The Liberals who disapproved the agitation found a spokesman in Earl Fitzwilliam. At his side we must place Mr. Roebuck; and it is reasonable to suppose that a portion of the constituency of the *Daily Telegraph* would find their places here also.

Earl Fitzwilliam wrote that—

> It was the duty of every man to stand by the Government. A vast and influential portion of the Liberal party is resolved to lay aside all personal and party feeling. I have spoken to many of the leading members of the Liberal party, and I have found no one approving of the language used by Mr. Gladstone. [He then speaks of the cruel and deceitful character of the aggressive policy of Russia] systematically carried out against every country with which it comes in contact—a policy which at the present time seriously imperils British interests, and which it will require unanimity in England to hold in check.—*Earl Fitzwilliam* in *Sheffield Independent*, see *P. M. G.* Oct. 21st.

> I live in a different sphere of life from Lord Fitzwilliam, and in that sphere I can only say that the view taken by him largely prevails.—"*Liberal*" in *D. N.* Oct. 25th.

> The *Edinburgh Review* said, the agitation had had three very serious and mischievous consequences. It had encouraged Servia to prolong the war, strengthened the war party in Russia, and embarrassed the diplomatic action of our own Government.—(Oct. 1876.)

Moreover, the distinction between those of the Liberal party who were credulous, and those who were sceptical, of the conversion of the Government appeared.

We find the terms "Whigs" and "Radicals" used to denote these two sections, the latter term also comprising those Liberals who insisted on a large measure of Emancipation,[1] while the Whigs were those whose views on this point were affected by the Reconciliation, the term being likewise extended to include the section which was opposed to a "violet" policy altogether, represented by Earl Fitzwilliam and the *Edinburgh Review*. Of course this division between these so-called Whigs and Radicals was not really the

[1] See *post*, chap. xv. § 2, *b*, as to the "Sogenannten blutigen Radicalen" of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*.

same as that between extreme and moderate Liberals in matters of domestic reform, nor, except to a very limited extent, was it at all true that the *personnel* was the same.

Conspicuous among the new-dubbed Radicals were the hereditary Whigs, Lords Russell and Argyll. On the other hand, there were some who would in any ordinary subdivision of the Liberal party be classed as Radicals, but who could not be considered "Radicals" in this new usage of the term. If Lord Hartington was for a time, ranked among the "Whigs," so too was Mr. Forster.

As for the knot of Radicals who constituted the Peace party, as long as it was a question of detaching the Government from a "red" policy, they seemed among the most ardent adherents of the "violet" policy. But they were not very prominent during the agitation of September, and later on, as we shall see, they fell away from Mr. Gladstone at a critical time, and threw the whole weight of their influence against an active "violet" policy.

The section represented by Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Joseph Cowen, also separated themselves from the following of Mr. Gladstone on the Eastern Question.

Lord Hartington's speech at Keighley on November 3rd[1] marks the healing of the schism between the sceptics and the easy-of-belief among the Liberals, and may be considered the fourth stage in the process of polarisation along party lines. It was the notification that the official leaders of the Liberal party had come to the conclusion that the Agitation was right, and that the "red" policy was repudiated by them. Moreover, Lord Hartington's speech indicated that unless the Government had frankly repudiated the "red" policy too, unless they were really converted to the "violet" policy to the extent, at least, of energetically pressing their proposal for direct interference in Turkey, the Opposition was prepared to attack them on that ground.

Thus the Liberal party, with the exception of a very small section, became united in opposition to the "red" policy. Treaty legalism and the pro-Turkish traditions of the Crimean War were definitely repudiated. There were still, and long remained, differences within the Liberal party as to the amount of risk which might be run, or responsibility incurred when it was a question of embarking upon an active "violet" policy as opposed

[1] *Post*, § 8, *c*.

to merely resisting a "red" one, which, as we shall see at a later stage, caused some divergence between Mr. Gladstone and the official leaders of the Opposition.[1] But the gradual rallying of the Liberal party to Mr. Gladstone marks the absorption of the "violet" policy into the party creed. The process was not complete, perhaps, till the series of speeches delivered by Mr. Gladstone in Midlothian in the winter of 1879-80, shortly before the general election. These speeches were accepted as the manifesto of the party, and as defining the issues on which the party battle was to be fought, and their reception was such that the leadership of any one except Mr. Gladstone was manifestly out of the question. The great Liberal party gave, as it were, an *ex post facto* vote of confidence in Mr. Gladstone's policy of 1876-77 upon the Eastern Question.

The question of the real nature of the bond that gives historical continuity to a party is one which has been much discussed. Taking the extreme views, it is represented on the one side that political principles form a *system;* that there are certain different fundamental doctrines accepted by each party from which their views on any special point may be *deduced.* On the other side it is said that party is all a matter of personal connection or fidelity to a party colour. The advocates of the former view would represent party controversies as being merely the successive manifestations of a deep-seated difference; so that it might be said that a man is born a Liberal or a Conservative, as it has been said that he is born a Platonist or an Aristotelian. Those who go to the opposite extreme would say that the new points of controversy which arise depend on such totally new considerations that it is impossible to find any general principles applicable alike to the old questions and the new, or at least it is certain that there are no such principles on which the leaders of parties, as a matter of fact, make up their opinions.

In the case of the Eastern Question in 1876, at all events, as we have endeavoured to show, the attitude of parties was not to be deduced from their former histories or party principles. And yet it would be a mistake to represent party exclusively as a matter of mere personal connection. If it were so it would be hard to see how a substantial change in the relative strength of parties could ever be brought about. We are too apt, perhaps, to be forgetful that there may be a large mass of opinion that holds the balance between the two parties, and gravitates to the one or the other

[1] *Post,* chap. xv. § 5.

according as one or the other party appears for the time being most fitted to give effect to its political ideals. It may well be questioned whether the theory of party government does not presuppose the existence of such a mass, and whether the tendency of modern party organisation is not well-nigh to destroy this unattached mass, and with it the condition on which the excellence of party government as a form of polity rests.

It may be granted that the considerations by which unattached opinion is swayed are sometimes very unimportant. But in the present instance they were not unimportant, they were in the highest degree important. At the election of 1880, a large body of opinion deserted Conservatism on account of the newly accreted elements with which Conservatism had encumbered itself. Thus the Eastern Question crisis of 1876, and the subsequent election, may be presented as events of high importance in the history of parties. It was then that Conservatism tied about its neck that stone, weighted with which it tried in vain to swim. What might have been the result of a different attitude towards the Eastern Question and those cognate to it on the part of the Conservative party no one can positively say; but it is certain that there were those who thought that Conservatism had thrown away an invaluable chance of the power to moderate the counsels of England for an entire generation.

§ 5. *Minor influences affecting Public Opinion.*

a. Russian Volunteers.—There were two circumstances with regard to the war which about this time attracted some attention. The first tended to Erubescence. It was the great influx of Russian volunteers into the Servian ranks. Russia, it was said, was making unofficial war upon Turkey.

On Sunday, Sept. 17th, General Tchernaieff caused Prince Milan to be proclaimed king in the Servian camp. Nothing came of this incident, and the proceeding was repudiated by the Servian Government,[1] but it was looked upon as an indication of the overweening attitude the Russians were assuming.

They were forcing the poor Servian peasants, it was said, to continue the war against their will, and stories were told of

[1] *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 320. Sir A. Buchanan to Lord Derby.

mutilations inflicted on themselves by the Servian soldiers to escape from service.[1]

> The cause is rapidly becoming a thoroughly Russian one. How could it be otherwise with such a number of Russian volunteers serving in the Servian army and fighting with such bravery? They have exposed themselves in the brunt of the battle with remarkable valour. Out of forty-eight of them, who as a company fought at Alexinatz one day last week, no fewer than thirty were left dead on the battle-field. . . . . Now and only now are the people awakening to the fact that their army is slipping out of their hands. Their jealousy on the subject of the large number of Russian officers is growing into fear, and this will make them accept peace with joy if it can be obtained for them on good conditions.—*Belgrade Correspondent, T.* Aug. 30th.

The *Daily Telegraph* speaks of

> the first wanton infraction of the Turkish frontier and the surreptitious addition subsequently of 3,400 Russians to the ranks of an army fighting against a Power at peace with their Sovereign, as acts which offend morality and disgrace the name of civilisation.—(Sept. 20th.)

> Nothing can be a greater fallacy than to talk, as some do, of Servia "nobly going into the field for the two provinces." It would be as reasonable to talk of the "noble" way in which the poor fellows taken by the old press-gang went on board our ships of war. The Prince of the country was coerced and the peasants herded; nor did the unfortunate wretches once make any stand against the Turks until the Russians poured across the Danube. That iniquitous movement has gone on during the temporary pause in the strife, until it is declared that as many as 15,000 Muscovities are under Tchernaieff's command. And there is a source of mischief here which must at once be dealt with.—*D. T.* Sept. 25th.

> Their army is now composed of very different stuff from the raw peasants on whom General Tchernaieff had to rely a month or two ago. Already he is said to have under his command half a Russian *Corps d'Armée*, and the stream of Russian recruits is swelling day by day. . . . . General Tchernaieff and his real Russian officers are declared to be now the real masters of the Principality. There are signs of drifting even in more august quarters.—*T.* Sept. 29th.

[1] Compare *Turkey*, i. 1877, Nos. 179 and 275, (despatches from Mr. Harris Gastrell). "One of my colleagues . . . tells me that Servia is really governed by the Russian officers, with Tchernaieff as a dictator; . . . and that without the Russians little fighting could have been accomplished."—(Sept. 3rd.)

Again, he writes of Russian volunteers travelling with Red Cross passports. Baron Mundy, who is at the head of the Servian Hospital service, confirmed the accounts of the self-mutilation of the Servian militia. He "estimated the number as high as 70 or 80 per cent. of the wounded, and said the Servians would not fight any longer if it were not for the presence of Russians."—(Sept. 12th.)

> No attempt is made to stop the rush of soldiers to Servia, and Russian Consuls openly make arrangements for the passage of the volunteers. The Russian people, if not their rulers, are, in fact, introducing a startling novelty by applying the principle of "limited liability" to war. Turkish misrule is answerable for such hostility in the first instance, but the Russian Government will, nevertheless, incur a heavy responsibility if it should not use all the power it may still possess over the excitement of its subjects.—*T.* Sept. 30th.

> It is, however, no longer accurate to speak of this reopened war as that of Servia with Turkey. If by "Servia" is meant the country and its population, she and they are now only involved in this immoral struggle as victims of a selfish plot. The male inhabitants are, indeed, driven to the field of slaughter by the pistols and sabres of Russian officers, and the valleys and woods are full of houseless and miserable families, whose villages are destroyed first by one army and then by the other.—*D. T.* Sept. 30th.

As appears by the Blue Books, reports were addressed to Lord Derby from time to time respecting the influx of volunteers, and on Sept. 27th, for the first time, as it appears, he made formal representations to the Russian ambassador on the subject. Meanwhile the Roumanian Government, anxious to give no cause of complaint on either hand by a too lax or a too stringent interpretation of the duties incumbent on a state in its position, was much embarrassed to know how it should treat the "excursionists."

On Sept. 20th Lieutenant-Colonel Mansfield telegraphed from Bucharest that a special train with 300 Russian volunteers, their arms scarcely concealed, had passed the day before. The Roumanian Government was much embarrassed, and M. Bratiano had asked his advice :—

> I indicated to M. Bratiano that, although, of course, the destination and object of the excursionists was, as it were, openly avowed, it was necessary to review the details calmly, and on technical grounds, so as to give little cause for remonstrances on the part of the Russian Consul-General should the matter arrive at that stage. I pointed out that excursionists in all countries employ special trains, and that they even cross the frontiers of foreign countries; that excursionists are frequently under the direction of one or more individuals; that, although for the moment munitions of war cannot be imported, there is, according to the Roumanian regulations, nothing to prevent travellers being

[1] *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 423.

in possession of a pistol or gun, while a sword is looked upon as part of a uniform, with which many persons are in the habit of travelling.—*Mansfield to Derby*, Sept. 20th.[1]

It is to be hoped that the Roumanian Minister was in the mood to appreciate humour.

b. Turkish barbarities in Servia.—The second circumstance had a tendency opposite to that we have just considered, a tendency, namely, to excite anti-Turkish feeling. It was the alleged disregard by the Turks of the Geneva Convention, and other excesses committed by them in Servian territory. This was but one more aspect of that general disregard of the principles of European and Christian civilisation which was the *gravamen* of the change on which anti-Turkism rested. It seems that the Turks' disregard of those "laws of war" by which the European nations have striven to mitigate the sufferings inseparable from an appeal to war—their cruelties to the wounded, their ruthless vengeance on defenceless populations—these things it seems did give the Turks a certain military advantage by inspiring the Servian, and later the Russian soldiers, with a great dread of being left wounded on the field,[2] and by hampering their generals with an additional responsibility for the fate of non-combatants.

The *Times* contained an official statement from M. Ristics, the Servian minister of war, that the Turks did not respect the Geneva Convention and fired on ambulances.—(Sept. 8th.)

[1] *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 400. With reference to the subject generally, General Tchernaieff writes, as the commander-in-chief of the Timok-Morava army, which comprised three-fourths of the Servian forces, to contradict a statement made by Lord Derby, "that the Servian army was almost entirely composed of Russian volunteers, and that in consequence Russia virtually, although not formally took part in the war." (*H. of L.* Feb. 20th, 1877.) General Tchernaieff says: "The first volunteers arrived about the middle of the month of August. In the eleven days' fighting before Alexinatz and in the battle of the 1st of September there were in all only a hundred Russian soldiers and officers. The influx of volunteers commenced when the head-quarters were transferred to Deligrad; officers and soldiers arrived every day in parties of ten and fifteen; the greatest number which ever arrived together was 145. From the commencement of the war to the conclusion of the armistice there were not more in all than three thousand Russian volunteers, officers and soldiers included, upon the scene of operations throughout all Servia. Of this number there were in the Timok-Morava army 1,806 soldiers and 646 officers. I can verify these figures by authentic documents of the staff. At the period of the battle of Djunis there were in the Valley of the Morava under my command about 28,000 combatants, the Russian volunteers included, only half of whom were armed with muskets of accelerated action. These forces occupied a line of defence of from thirty-five to forty kilometres, for the purpose of preventing the conflagrations and massacres of the Turks in every town and village which fell into their power." —*D. N.* Feb. 24th, 1877.

[2] This style of fighting is working its inevitable result on the Russian soldier, who hesitates to face this grim additional casualty of the battle-field.—*A. Forbes*, *19th Cent.*, Nov. 1877, p. 571.

Again, a letter from M. Ristics charging them with cruel and objectless devastation, and giving an account of the cruel mutilation and murder of the secretary of the Alexinatz Red Cross Committee by Turkish cavalry.—(Sept. 12th.)

Again a letter from Captain Nolan and leader on the subject. —(Sept. 13th.)

Sir Arnold Kemball reports great depredations have been committed by the Turkish irregular troops in Servia, but that no case of outrage on women or mutilation of the wounded had come under his notice. With respect to this last item of news, it is sufficient for the present to observe that it is contradicted by statements from Servian sources corroborated by English visitors in Servia, but it is our duty and our pleasure to put confidence in the watchfulness of Sir Arnold Kemball as a specially deputed Commissioner with the Turkish Army.—*T.* Sept. 15th.

c. Murad deposed in favour of Abdul Hamid II.—The replacing of the almost imbecile Sultan Murad by Abdul Hamid II. was not regarded in England as having any particular significance.

On Aug. 31st the Turkish Minister notified to Sir Henry Elliot that the malady from which Murad had suffered since his accession, and which had continually grown worse, had rendered it impossible for him to hold the reins of government. The throne had consequently been declared vacant, and the heir-presumptive, Abdul Hamid II., had that day been proclaimed Emperor of Turkey.

§ 6. *Course of the Negotiations.*

a. Suspension of Hostilities.—After the great Servian defeat of September 1st, English Public Opinion probably attached more importance to the efforts of the diplomatists than to those of the soldiers, so before resuming the narrative of the Servian War from the points at which we left it[2] we must speak of the course of the negotiations. The correspondents of course enabled the public at home to follow events in the field as they actually occurred. But with the course of diplomacy it was different. That negotiations were taking place was known. What they were was not accurately

[1] *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 133. Mr. Blunt reports from Salonica (Sept. 4th) that there were no signs of public excitement (No. 267). Sir Henry Elliot reports (Sept. 14th) that he could not report the general impression was favourable; but he could not discover any grounds for it, except the impression that the new Sultan was a man of firm will, who might prove an arbitrary sovereign. There appears, he said, much that gives good promise (No. 341).

[2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 343.

known till afterwards. Thus the influences tending to sway Public Opinion were the actual course of the war, and the assumed course of the negotiations.

So far as Public Opinion was swayed by a difference between the assumed and the actual course of the negotiations, it was swayed by a misapprehension which it was in the power of the Government to remove.

If we compare Lord Derby's action in the first half of September with his attitude in June, it will be seen that under the stress of events he had greatly modified his policy in the "violet" direction.

Of the influences which may have brought about this change the pressure of Public Opinion is the most obvious, and the probability that we have here the true cause is enhanced by a consideration of the fact that, as we shall presently see, a marked relaxation of the pressure of Public Opinion about the end of September corresponds with a marked swinging back of Lord Derby's policy in the "red" direction. But the course of Lord Derby's diplomacy early in September was sufficient to justify the incipient reconciliation as a not unreasonable attitude of Public Opinion, however staunchly it held to the "violet" policy.

Lord Derby's aim in the negotiations was twofold.[1] First there was the immediate object of putting an end to the actual fighting; in the second place, Lord Derby now engaged in the task of attempting to impose a solution. With respect to the first object, there was some talk of "good offices" in August, but the important step was taken contemporaneously with the great Servian defeat at Alexinatz. On September 1st, Sir H. Elliot was instructed by telegraph to propose to the Turkish Government an armistice of not less than a month, with a view to the immediate discussion of terms of peace. The English request was supported by the other Powers; but the Porte objected to an armistice, and, by way of counter-offer which they termed a practical compliance with the demand of the Powers, about the middle of September the Porte notified the terms on which they were willing to grant peace to Servia, and

[1] For an account of these negotiations see the "Historical *Resumé*" contained in Lord Derby's despatch of Oct. 30th, 1876 [*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 800] (addressed to Lord Loftus, English ambassador at St. Petersburg), and expressed to be written for the purpose of placing "on consecutive record the various efforts which Her Majesty's Government have made for the preservation of peace in Eastern Europe." This despatch recapitulates many previous ones and appears in the London morning papers of Nov. 11th, but as we shall see many of the steps in the negotiation had been previously made known.

announced a suspension of hostilities until September 25th, hoping the Powers would induce the Princes of Servia and Montenegro to give similar orders to their own generals.

The Turkish terms provided, among other things, that the Servian fortresses should be garrisoned by Turkish troops; the Servian militia abolished, and her forces restricted to a mere *gendarmerie*, and that she should send back refugees from the border Provinces. The substance of these terms was at once published, and it was also understood that they were considered quite inadmissible. The fact of the suspension of hostilities was also of course known.

The order to the Turkish generals to suspend hostilities was accepted by the English Government as equivalent to an armistice, in the confidence that the time would be further extended in case of necessity, and Mr. White, the English Consul-General at Belgrade, was at once instructed to press Prince Milan to give similar orders, but at the same time to assure him that this counsel did not imply acquiescence on the part of the English Government in the terms proposed by the Porte, some of which they considered quite inadmissible.

On September 24th, the eve of the date for the resumption of hostilities, no terms of peace had been agreed to, and the Porte still refusing a formal armistice proposed to prolong the suspension of hostilities till October 2nd. Prince Milan, however, rejected the proposal, and professed himself ready to conclude a regular armistice, but not an arrangement like the one hitherto in operation, which he considered ill-defined.[1]

The decision of Prince Milan was known in England on September 28th. On the same day the Servians made a forward movement, and some fighting occurred on the Morava, which appears to have resulted in a temporary advantage to the Servians, but no fighting of real importance, from a military point of view, took place for some little time longer.[2] From another point of view, however, the military action of Servia at this crisis was not without its importance. A loud outcry was raised by some of the "red" partisans in England that Servia had been guilty of a breach of faith, and the charge was reiterated against the Agitation that it was inimical to peace inasmuch as the action of the advocates of

[1] Sept. 21st. Consul-General White telegraphed, "The Servian Government represent that in consequence of great proximity of outposts to principal armies the present suspension of hostilities proves itself unpractical."—*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 319.

[2] *Post*, § 8, *c*.

a "violet" policy in England had encouraged Servia. The action of Servia was generally regarded as inopportune to say the least, seeing that the Great Powers had taken up the matter, and were, as was supposed, about to solve the problem by imposing a measure of emancipation upon Turkey.

If all the Powers had agreed that a satisfactory solution was to be imposed upon the Porte, by force if necessary, then, clearly, single-handed action either on the part of Servia or of Russia was quite unnecessary for the purpose of achieving the emancipation of the Provincials, and could only be prompted by some sinister motive. This was strongly urged by the *Daily Telegraph*, while they claimed that Lord Derby had as good as procured the acceptance of a plan which would have insured good government for the Provincials if Servia had not thrown everything into confusion again. The force of the argument of course depended on the assumption that the contemplated settlement was really an adequate measure of emancipation.

> All the five Great Powers—Germany, Russia, France, Austria, and Italy—have definitely accepted the propositions for peace and reform made by Great Britain, and in the face of such unanimity the belligerents will naturally agree to the longer armistice during which the peace, decided upon as far as regards the principle, may be settled in its details.—*D. T.* Sept. 25th.
>
> The *Post* observes that it is true our Foreign Minister has not been advocating the precise policy suggested to him by the indignation meetings in England, but then he has made proposals which the Great Powers could accept. And thus, instead of bringing his country into political contempt and isolation, he has enabled her to take the lead.—(Sept. 25th.)
>
> We are sometimes told that this is an era of brute force, and that morality must be silent or subdued in the midst of armed men, the sword delivering judgments and the cannon laying down laws. Yet the interposition of the Six Powers between the belligerents is based distinctly on moral considerations. It is an instinct of humanity, a conviction of Turkish misrule, that has united Europe in a task of intervention which a few weeks ago was believed to be impossible, owing to international jealousies and the intrinsic difficulties of the case. The poor women slaughtered in Bulgaria did not die in vain: their cries have done more to paralyse the Ottoman than Servian swords. In answer to them at Constantinople to-day there are the representatives of Christendom, behind them millions of armed warriors and ironclads by the score. This moral victory, this European dictatorship in the interest of humanity, good government, and future tranquillity in the East, is not as yet the end of anything excepting the Turko-Servian war.

It is the beginning of one of the most interesting and momentous chapters in the history of international relations. The agreement of the Great Powers in the principles of a solution is much gained; but there will be formidable difficulties in the practical application . . . . But there is no reason why the Christians should not obtain the right to elect representatives who would act as tribunes of the people to bring before the rulers of the country cases of injustice, with the privilege of final appeal to the Ambassadors of the Six Powers, or to a permanent European Commission.—*D. T.* Sept. 26th.

Events must decide whether the bad faith and desperate defiance of Servia, in breaking the truce which she had accepted, can greatly influence the course of affairs. It may turn out an idle sign of disappointment, or a serious incident; but until we hear of deeds following the rash words of M. Ristics the interest of the hour rests with the address which the British Foreign Minister yesterday delivered.—*D. T.* Sept. 28th.

The *Daily News* observes that the gravity of the responsibility which Servia has taken upon herself in rejecting the proposed preliminaries of peace is not to be denied or diminished even by those who are most willing to make excuses for her action. Something, however, must be said for the populations who began to see that the diplomatists were not likely to do much for them. —(Sept. 29th.)

It would be useless to hide the importance of the step which has been taken by Servia. By declining to suspend hostilities unless Turkey shall grant a regular armistice for a month or six weeks she disarranges the calculations of diplomacy at a critical moment.—*T.* Sept. 29th.

The telegraphic letter which the *Times* prints this morning from its correspondent at Belgrade puts the mischievous results of the recent agitation in England in the strongest light. . . . Servia, in the view of the *Times* correspondent, considers herself mistress of the situation. She can now count, as she believes, not only on the active support of Russia, but on the passive support of England. If Russia "declares war against Turkey, she will only in the most disinterested manner possible be carrying out the policy of the English nation." This latter allegation, adds the writer, "is not mine. I am only recording it as that of the Servian war-party." . . . . Now, is this a really correct interpretation of English feeling? If not, the sooner it is disavowed the better. We in England know well that it is not a correct interpretation of English feeling —that it is as far as can well be from such an interpretation . . . . We see at this moment that even the loudest of the agitators for an Anglo-Russian agreement to settle the Eastern Question have been struck into silence by the imminence of the danger which they have provoked. As the *Times* correspondent says, the sooner our supposed intentions are disavowed the better. True. Our only fear is lest the soonest should be too late.—*P. M. G.* Oct. 6th.

Lord Derby administered a severe rebuke to Prince Milan, and warned him that any attempt on the part of Servian commanders to renew active operations would forfeit the support of England. We may gather that he sought to induce Russia to make similar representations, and failed, for he writes :—

> In explaining the action of Russia in the matter Count Schouvaloff told me that though his Government had advised the Servian Government not to renew hostilities, yet that they could not press the matter, as they had from the first required the conclusion of a regular armistice.—*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 800.[1]

b. The Demand for Punishment.—With regard to the other branch of the negotiations, that, namely, which looked beyond the mere bringing about of an armistice, Lord Derby had been in constant communication with Count Schouvaloff, and on Sept. 11th he stated to him terms which the English Government thought might form the basis of a pacification, and which were substantially those proposed to the Porte ten days later.

In his despatch to Sir Henry Elliot, Lord Derby added: Her Majesty's Government would regard as inadmissible any modification of the Treaty of Paris unfavourable to Servia, the resumption of the right to garrison Servian fortresses, or the deposition of Prince Milan.[2]

In a day or two Lord Derby was informed that Russia had agreed that a settlement might be come to substantially on the terms Lord Derby had suggested, though she foresaw that a territorial concession to Montenegro would become imperative; and Count Schouvaloff added that in the opinion of his Government a liberal concession of local autonomy should not be merely advised, but ought to be categorically imposed upon the Porte. At the same time Russia thought the first duty of the Great Powers was to stop further bloodshed by insisting on an immediate armistice without allowing the Turks to impose any conditions—on this point Russia was inflexibly resolved. She trusted she would not be compelled to act singly against the Turks.[3] Meanwhile Sir H.

[1] See also No. 447.

[2] *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 196. Whether this formed part of his communication to Count Schouvaloff does not appear. At all events the despatch to Lord Loftus (No. 197), otherwise a duplicate of that to Sir H. Elliot, makes no mention of it. Was this for fear of "encouraging" Russia?

[3] *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 212.

Elliot was protesting how fatal autonomy "as understood in England" [1] would be.

The 21st of September is a salient point in the history of the negotiations by reason of two most important despatches from Lord Derby to Sir Henry Elliot both bearing that date. The one demanded the punishment of certain Turkish officers.

> [Lord Derby referred to Mr. Baring's reports of the atrocities, and informed Sir Henry Elliot that] no political considerations would justify the toleration of such acts; and one of the foremost conditions for the settlement of the questions now pending must be that ample reparation shall be afforded to the sufferers, and their future security guaranteed. [The ambassador is directed] to demand a personal audience of the Sultan, and communicate to His Majesty in substance the result of Mr. Baring's inquiries mentioning by name, Shefket Pasha, Hafiz Pasha, Tossoun Bey, Achmet Agha and the other officials whose conduct [Mr. Baring] has denounced, [to] call for reparation and justice [and to] urge that striking examples should be made on the spot of those who have connived at or taken part in the atrocities.—*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 316.

Some slight show was made by the Porte of a movement as if to comply with this demand for punishment, but substantially it was altogether evaded. In particular, Shefket was retained in posts of honour. Meanwhile, the subject was frequently recurred to by the English diplomatists, but at last it was allowed to drop.[2] Such a conclusion, of course, was not foreseen at the time, and the demand was regarded as constituting an important step taken by the English Government.

c. The English Terms.—The other and the more important of the two despatches of September 21st pressed upon the Porte the acceptance of what was afterwards known as the "English Terms." This was a solution formulated by Lord Derby, and one to which he received the adhesion of the Great Powers. It amounted to a curtailment of the sovereignty of Turkey, and if it had been categorically

[1] *Turkey*, i. 1877, Nos. 336 and 340.

[2] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 336, as to the Turkish Judicial Commission and Mr. Baring's withdrawal on the acquittal of Tossoun Bey. Sir Henry Elliot speaks of Mr. Baring's report as showing that the Commission was desirous of favouring the accused, rather than of eliciting truth (Oct. 21st, 1876, *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 847). Achmet Agha and one other obscure person were sentenced to death; but "Achmet Agha still lived at the date of the latest news" (*Lessons in Massacre*, p. 34). In this pamphlet dated March 10th, 1877, Mr. Gladstone discusses the treatment of the guilty persons by the Porte. Six other persons, he says, were sentenced to hard labour, or short imprisonments, and two functionaries were recalled, but it does not appear whether these sentences were ever carried out (*Ibid.* p. 69).

imposed, it would have been a step such as was adumbrated by the Andrassy Note and Berlin Memorandum.

The substance of this despatch was telegraphed to Sir Henry Elliot. He was directed to impress upon the Porte the urgency of the situation, and the advantage which would be gained by a prompt and ready acceptance of the terms proposed, namely:—

(1). The *status quo*, speaking roughly, both as regards Bosnia and Montenegro.

(2). That the Porte should simultaneously undertake, in a Protocol to be signed at Constantinople with the representatives of the mediating Powers, to grant to Bosnia and the Herzegovina a system of local or administrative autonomy, by which is to be understood a system of local institutions which shall give the population some control over their own local affairs, and guarantees against the exercise of arbitrary authority. There is to be no question of the creation of a tributary state.

Guarantees of a similar kind to be also provided against maladministration in Bulgaria. The exact details of these might be discussed later.—*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 324.[1]

It is somewhat remarkable that these important steps in the negotiations were taken by Lord Derby on the very day that Lord Beaconsfield delivered his Aylesbury speech. This is a circumstance which must be taken into account in considering the influence of the latter on the progress of the Reconciliation.

"Actions speak louder than words" is a trite saying. However meagre the measure of Emancipation wrapped up in Lord Derby's "local autonomy," to those who inclined to believe in the conversion of the Government it did seem that "local autonomy" would result in the exclusion of the Turkish Power from the opportunity of coercing or interfering with the daily lives of the Provincials. On the other hand there were sceptics who thought Lord Derby's proposal illusory. As the proposal was never worked out, it would be a somewhat barren task to discuss which was the more correct estimate of it.

The "English" Terms were communicated to the Porte on Sept. 25th, and they were given to the world correctly in

[1] On Sept. 15th Lord Derby explained to Sir Henry Elliot (No. 238), "there is no question raised of the creation of a tributary state, and that nothing more is intended by Her Majesty's Government than a system of local institutions which shall give the population some control over their own local affairs, and guarantees against the exercise of arbitrary authority." Similar explanations were given to Austria (see No. 297), and Count Andrassy distinguished between "local autonomy" and "political autonomy" (No. 323).

substance by the telegrams which appeared in the English newspapers of that day.

Lord Derby informed the City deputation which waited on him on September 27th, that the demand for the punishment of the authors of the atrocities had been made, and the despatch containing the demand was published in the English newspapers of October 7th. Up to this point then it may almost be said that the Government conducted the negotiations *coram populo*. The tendencies to regard Lord Derby's solution as a working one, or on the other hand as altogether inadequate, exhibit themselves in the *Times* and the *Daily News* respectively, but even in those most sceptical of their value a considerable change is to be recognised as compared with the tone of a month before.

> Our Austrian Correspondent states in another column the plans which Lord Derby has laid before the Porte for the pacification of Turkey. . . . It will be seen that the Prime Minister did not speak with perfect accuracy in saying that Lord Derby would make the same proposals as he submitted to the Powers before Servia declared war, for nothing was then known about the atrocities in Bulgaria, and the expediency of making administrative changes in that Province had scarcely been discussed. The agitation in this country, therefore, has already had some effect on the Government; and Mr. Gladstone would have had no need to make such a defence of the Liberal Party as he offered in a vigorous speech on Saturday if his conduct and that of other Liberals had not been impugned by the Prime Minister.—*T.* Sept. 25th.
>
> We have faith in Lord Derby's own recognition of the conditions requisite for a permanent settlement of the complex questions raised by the war. But his propositions for effecting a settlement, so far as they have been explained, might be made to mean anything or nothing. They might bring about a change which would satisfy Mr. Gladstone himself, or they might leave things in a state which would please the Turks. . . . Some foreign controlling power is needed to select suitable men, to see that they do their duty, and to insure them against a hasty recall. No doubt the task would be so difficult and delicate that timid diplomatists would prefer to patch up any kind of peace rather than prolong a perilous discussion. But, if a peace be made in absolute defiance of the influences which stirred up the present war, it will be a hollow peace, and the struggle may have to be renewed at a time less favourable to Europe. Happily, there is ground for hope that the need of a controlling body will be more and more clearly recognised by the Powers as the negotiations proceed.—*T.* Sept. 26th.
>
> We are told that all the Powers now agree to press Lord

Derby's proposals on the Porte, but we are not told that they are agreed upon the specific character of the governments which are to be established in the three Provinces. Administrative autonomy is a term of very indefinite meaning, and leaves room for the development of very wide differences between the Powers. The most that any one in this country has asked for the Christian Provinces is that they shall be set free from the administrative government of Turkey, but to secure this much more than mere administrative change has been recognised as necessary. Mere administrative authority cannot guarantee its own existence. . . . Whether [the proposals] are such as ought to be presented in the name of England, the English people must decide. It may be that explanations will be forthcoming which will throw an unsuspected light on their value, or it may be that they will be expanded under pressure of events, so as to include some real security for the Christians of Turkey. At present, however, they look like an attempt to replace the Christians under the government of the Porte, relying upon a repetition of its worthless promises.—*D. N.* Sept. 26th.

So far as the view of the country on the Eastern Question is concerned, Parliament is not needed to concentrate and embody it. Lord Derby . . knows we are all agreed, and we believe he is agreed with us, that, while we should, of course, prefer that Turkey should be reformed and become a peaceful and prosperous Empire, that must henceforth be abandoned as an impossible dream. What we now all desire is practical autonomy, in some form or other, for the oppressed and outraged European Provinces. But as for what is to be done towards the end, our negotiators must, on the whole, be left for the present to their own efforts. They have to extort as much as they can from the Porte, and, what is perhaps more difficult, to reconcile the opposed or the imaginary interests of the Great Powers.—*T.* Sept. 30th.

Prince Gortschakoff's "vassal and tributary autonomy" bears the same relation to Lord Derby's local self-government that Mr. Butt's Home Rule bears to the project of county boards.—*D. N.* Oct. 2nd.

d. The proposal for Coercion.—We must now turn to a side of the negotiations, as to which the public were not supplied with accurate information, but, on the contrary, were allowed to remain under a serious misapprehension.

On September 13th, as we have seen, Count Schouvaloff attempted to bring Lord Derby to the contingency of the Porte refusing the "English Terms." What would happen in that case? Would England help to "impose" them? But this was just the point on which Lord Derby, as long as possible, refused to commit himself. He would not contemplate the contingency. But in the view of the Russian Government—and as the event showed they

were right—the contingency was one which would certainly occur unless the Powers were prepared to "insist." Accordingly, on Sept. 26th Count Schouvaloff proposed to Lord Derby that, in the event of the English terms being refused by the Porte,

> Bosnia should be occupied by an Austrian and Bulgaria by a Russian force, and the united fleets of the Powers should enter the Bosphorus. The Russian Government stated themselves willing to abandon the proposed occupation if the naval demonstration was considered sufficient by Her Majesty's Government.
>
> General Sumarokoff arrived in Vienna at the same time with a similar proposal.—*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 800.

In the account which Lord Derby at once wrote to Sir Henry Elliot[1] he added that Prince Gortschakoff expressed his belief that the mere threat would be enough.

The eight days which follow this communication to Lord Derby are perhaps in truth the crisis of the whole matter. Not improbably it was then that the die was cast which determined the attitude which England was finally to assume. The question at issue was,—Would the English Government actively adopt a policy of Emancipation, even though this might involve a display of force against Turkey; or would they fall back upon a policy of mere Order, merging into hostility to Russia when that which was the inevitable alternative occurred and Russia proceeded alone to apply coercion to Turkey?

Now the first thing to notice is that the decision appears for eight days to have hung in doubt. The Russian proposal was not definitely rejected till October 4th.

Secondly, those eight days were a time of strong erubescence in Public Opinion, the effect of which was greatly to reduce the pressure upon the Government in the direction of accepting the Russian proposal.

And in the third place, this attitude of Public Opinion was owing to a gross misconception of the nature of the Russian proposal, a misconception which might have been corrected by the Government, which was in possession of the true facts.

Of course no absolute judgment can be formed on the motives and influences which determined the course of the English Ministers at this fateful crisis. This suspense of decision may have been quite unconnected with the state of Public Opinion in England. Or, after all, the suspense may have been only apparent;

[1] *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 408.

Lord Derby may have wished to see if Turkey could in this way be frightened into accepting the English terms.

But perhaps the decision, on which so much was to turn, *really* hung in doubt during those eight days. If the English Ministers had been forced so far towards a "violet" policy as to propose the "English Terms" against their will and by a pressure from outside Public Opinion which they could not withstand, it may be they were prepared reluctantly to go further in the same course and assent to the Russian proposal, under the same pressure if it must be; but that they resented the pressure and the necessity, and were glad to be relieved from them, even though the relief resulted from an access of Russophobia induced by false pretences.

However these things may be, the circumstances of those eight days seem to be worthy of minute and careful attention with regard to the question of the action and reaction of the Cabinet and Public Opinion one upon the other.

We have stated what the Russian proposal really was; we have now to see what it was thought to be out of doors.[1]

In the London papers of Monday, Oct. 2nd, telegrams appeared from the foreign correspondents professing to give an account of the Russian proposals, which, it was said, were contained in the Czar's letter. These accounts were calculated to give a false impression in three respects.

First. It represented it as a proposition made by the Czar behind England's back, instead of one which was made to Lord Derby himself by Count Schouvaloff, as well as to the Emperor of Austria.

Secondly. The proposed naval demonstration was represented as confined to the Russian and Austrian fleets, instead of embracing the proposal that the English fleet should take part in it.

Under this misapprehension the *Times* writes:—

> If the ships of Russia and Austria should watch the Bosphorus, they must watch it alongside our own.—(Oct. 2nd.)

Thirdly. It suppressed the important alternative proposal of a naval demonstration without occupation.

The serious tone of the London papers of Oct. 2nd, under the

[1] Towards the end of September the Czar despatched an autograph letter to the Emperor of Austria, which the *Times*, Sept. 30th, speaks of as "exciting the curiosity of the Continent."

impression produced by this garbled version of the Russian proposals, shows the great influence it had in reinforcing the "red" notions at this juncture.

> The political atmosphere in the East is not clearing. As the public will see from the telegrams of our Berlin and our Paris Correspondents, which we publish in another column, the contents of the Emperor Alexander's autograph letter to the Emperor Francis Joseph were very serious indeed. . . . The Czar, we hear to-day, proposed to cut the knot by suggesting that Servia should retain her present independence under the guarantee of Russian Generals, that a Russian army should occupy Bulgaria, and that an Austrian army should occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also proposed that the Bosphorus should be watched by the combined fleets of the two Powers.—*T.* Oct. 2nd.

> This morning's news from the East is serious indeed. . . . When the Czar's proposal was made does not appear. It seems all but certain that it was not known to the English Cabinet up to Wednesday morning; for on that day Lord Derby, in speaking of the relations of the Great Powers, used language inconsistent with a knowledge of the Russian Emperor's plans. One thing, however, is beyond doubt. The Czar's proposal was made after he, and his Ministers, and his people had been assured by Mr. Gladstone and one or two leading English newspapers that Eastern Europe lay all before them, wherein to fulfil their benevolent desire to drive out the Turks; and that so complete and intense was English sympathy with that good work that Her Majesty's Government would not be allowed to interfere with its accomplishment in any way whatever. That the English Government had been "erased" by a flood of indignation at Turkish barbarism was obviously a belief in the Czar's mind when he wrote the letter, as we may see by the way in which he proposes to deal with Constantinople. Not only are certain provinces of the Turkish Empire to be occupied by Austrian and Russian troops, but the Bosphorus is "to be watched by the navies of the two Powers." The supposition is, no doubt, that the British fleet will be recalled —in obedience to the voice of the English nation, which has decided that, if the Government make such another move as it was supposed to have made when the fleet was sent to Besika Bay, it shall be turned out of office. That the voice of the nation had said nothing of the sort every rational man within its confines knows well. But the rational have for the most part kept silence, bending their heads till the storm of passionate, vicious, and reckless denunciation passed by; and thus a hot-headed minority of humanitarians have had an opportunity of misleading the Czar more completely than his father was misled when he believed in the domination of an English peace party. . . . But we need not despair yet. English clamour sees now what it has been clamouring for, and is a little alarmed (as it justly may be) at the

prospect. English common sense is lifting its head again. The Government is free to go on upon a steady course of opposition to political fraud and duplicity.—*P. M. G.* Oct. 2nd.

The English nation will be glad to have the assurance that the proposals made by Russia to all the Great Powers for the occupation of Bulgaria by her troops, and of Bosnia and Herzegovina by those of Austria, are intended to be suggestions rather than anything more serious. Russia has in principle accepted Lord Derby's plans for the pacification of the disturbed provinces, and she cannot honourably draw back from the engagement. . . . The Czar's purpose, we may hope, was to enforce the execution of those plans, and if at the Conference the Great Powers should disapprove his scheme, as they are certain to do, he will, we may assume, be ready to examine any alternative which they may have to offer. . . . Russia cannot be too speedily or too emphatically warned that, in proposing to occupy Bulgaria the Emperor Alexander has misread the mind of Europe, if, indeed, he has taken the trouble to consult its wishes. It is true that we detest Turkish misrule as heartily as the Russians themselves can do, that we have not one word to say for the Porte, and that we wish to tie the hands of Mahometan fanaticism. We should be very glad if Russia would help us to protect the Christians of the Balkan Peninsula in any one of the ways which have found favour among practical men. As specimens of those plans, we commend to notice the suggestions made in another column by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe and Lord Justice James.—*T.* Oct. 3rd.[1]

The *Times* says if Russia attempted to carry out the proposed occupation, it would call Austria into the field.—(Oct. 6th.)

Subsequently, in looking back to what had been the prevailing impression at this critical juncture, the *Times*[2] speaks of the impression which had been "allowed to get abroad," with reference to the Russian proposals. Similarly, the *Daily News* commenting on the despatch[3] published in the newspapers of that morning, remarks:—

We have in this despatch the true story of the famous Russian threat to occupy Bulgaria, which was used to excite English opinion, and which distressed many well-wishers to the Christians in Turkey.—(Nov. 11th.)

It seems clear that on September 13th, Lord Derby did not treat the Russian suggestion that a measure of Emancipation should be *imposed* upon the Porte as a nefarious one against which England was bound to protest, or even as anything in which it was quite out

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 397 and 399. [2] Oct. 28th, 1876.
[3] "The Historical *Resumé*," *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 800.

of the question for England to take part.[1] Again, on the 26th, when a definite proposition was made that the English fleet should take part in a measure of coercion in case the Porte should prove obstinate, he was not so scandalised that he could immediately reject it. He appears to have dwelt on what he considered its inopportuneness rather than on any insuperable objection to the principle.

It was, he said, too grave a matter for him to pronounce an opinion on it offhand without consulting his colleagues. He discussed the necessity or expediency of the step. He did not, he said, anticipate the absolute rejection of the English proposals by the Porte. In the excited state of men's minds there was danger in speaking of force. There would be irritation at Constantinople. Every one was looking for a peaceable solution, and these menaces would produce a general feeling of alarm and uneasiness.[2]

On September 26th Lord Derby was perhaps sanguine that the matter would be settled by the acceptance of the English terms. But on the next day Sir Henry Elliot telegraphed that the Porte had offered a magnificent scheme of general reform including an elective assembly, and was willing to sign peace on that basis.[3] Lord Derby promptly replied that as all the Great Powers had agreed to support the English terms it would be difficult to modify them, and in especial, that it was hopeless to attempt to procure the abandonment of the term "autonomy." The Porte, he said, ought to be satisfied with the qualifying expressions.[4]

The policy "Order" now seemed to be served by anything which would cause the Porte to agree. "Order" was on the verge of becoming an anti-Turkish policy. Perhaps Lord Derby was not unwilling to try the experiment whether the Porte would yield to the threat of force. At all events prior to October 3rd, the English ambassador communicated to the Porte the fact that Russia had proposed "to make use of material coercion."[5]

But the Turkish Government entertained strong objections, both to the signature of a protocol promising reforms in the insurgent provinces, by which they said the *prestige* and authority

[1] It is worth notice that on the 12th he received word that Count Andrassy, in reply to Sir A. Buchanan's question how conditions were to be imposed if the Porte refused, answered, "by employing force, which could be easily done by a naval demonstration at Constantinople."—*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 206.

[2] *Ibid.* No. 408.

[3] *Ibid.* No. 418.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 420.

[5] *Ibid.* No. 486.

of the Porte in all parts of the empire would be impaired, and to the expression "local autonomy" as applied to those reforms.[1]

On October 3rd, Lord Derby learnt that the Porte rejected the English terms.[2]

Sir Henry Elliot was instructed once more to urge the Porte lest more onerous terms should be pressed on them by force.[3] In a long conversation between Lord Derby and Count Schouvaloff on the same day,[4] when Count Schouvaloff again referred to the Russian proposal for coercion, a marked change of Lord Derby's tone becomes apparent in reference to these proposals. Lord Derby still said that he could give no positive opinion until after the Cabinet Council fixed for the next day (October 4th), but he did not conceal from the Russian ambassador that the proposals were of a nature to raise grave objections, and that some of them were likely to be viewed with disfavour in England. Lord Derby took temporary refuge in an alternative suggestion that the Powers should fall back upon their original demand for an armistice. Crossing, or in reply to this, (it is not quite clear which), came a similar proposal from Prince Gortschakoff that the bloodshed should be arrested "by immediately imposing an armistice or truce of six weeks on both parties, so as to give the mediating Governments time to consider the means of definitively arranging the pending questions."

After the Cabinet Council, Lord Derby informed the Russian ambassador of the decision of the Government "to give their support to the proposal of an armistice of not less than a month as the next step to be taken in the event of the rejection by Turkey of the proposed terms for a basis of peace." They had, "on the other hand, been unable to concur in the measures of occupation and the entry of the united fleets into the Bosphorus, which had been previously suggested by Prince Gortschakoff."[5]

e. The English Government fall back on "Isolation."—The Russian proposal for coercion having thus been rejected by the English Cabinet, Lord Derby proceeded with the alternative, and Sir Henry Elliot was instructed to state that, on the conclusion of an armistice, it was proposed that a Conference should immediately follow. He was further to intimate that, in case of the refusal of an armistice, he was instructed to leave

[1] *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 800.
[2] *Ibid.* Nos. 483 and 486.
[3] *Ibid* No. 484.
[4] That is, Oct. 3rd.
[5] Derby to Loftus, Oct. 4th, *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 506.

Constantinople, as it would then be evident that all further exertions on the part of Her Majesty's Government to save the Porte from ruin would have become useless.[1]

On October 12th the Porte intimated that they were ready to agree to a regular armistice, but it must be for six months; and on the same day they promulgated one of their numerous general schemes of reform for the whole Ottoman Empire.

Lord Derby was instant in urging Servia and Montenegro to accept the long armistice, and in his endeavour to persuade the other Powers to do so too. In particular he pressed on Russia and Austria the importance of their inducing Servia to agree. France and Austria consented to recommend the acceptance of the long armistice at Belgrade. Italy demurred, and Germany refrained from committing herself to either view. Count Schouvaloff expressed his doubts. Lord Derby refused to see in this hesitation anything but a deliberate design to manufacture a pretext for making war on Turkey with a view to aggrandisement. His answer marks a great stride along the path which led from mere Order to an active "red" policy.

> I thought it right to warn his Excellency that, however strong might be his feeling of national indignation against Turkish cruelties, it would be superseded by a very different sentiment if it were once believed by the English nation that Constantinople was threatened. I said that, rightly or wrongly, the conclusion to which every one here would come, would be that the rejection by Russia of the Turkish proposal indicated a fixed purpose of going to war; and I entreated him to omit no effort to make his Government understand the light in which this resolution would be viewed by the English people.—*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 800.

Of the two aims which, as we have seen, are to be distinguished in the negotiations set on foot by Lord Derby in September, one, and that the most important, the task of bringing about a solution, had somehow dropped out of sight, and Lord Derby's whole efforts were now concentrated on the other aim, to put an end to the actual fighting.

An appeal which Lord Derby at this juncture made to Prince Bismarck, to use the influence of Germany to overcome the Russian objections to the long armistice, is most curiously reflected in the *Times*. This circumstance suggests that, though the *Times* can by

[1] Sir Henry Elliot was instructed to refer home before resorting to this step (No. 516). Lord Derby writes (Oct. 16th):—"The object of the withdrawal of the ambassador would have been to show displeasure on the part of England, but there would have been no diplomatic rupture" (No. 670).

no means be regarded as having been a Government organ at this period, yet, on this occasion it was "inspired."

> Prince Bismarck has more than once been able to determine whether there should be peace or war in Europe; but we doubt whether he ever before held in his hand so much power for good or evil as he does at this moment. Russia, Austria, and Turkey seem all to be drifting towards the contest which has haunted the minds of statesmen for a century. . . . The effects of the seizure of Silesia have been described by a great writer in a famous passage. . . . Prince Bismarck . . . is, perhaps, the one man who can avert a catastrophe as awful as that pictured in Macaulay's rhetoric. The rulers of Turkey have, we fear, made up their minds not to yield much more, and the Russian Court may soon be at the mercy of the storm which it has helped to raise. But it is not too late to keep back Russia, and if any country can thus save the world from a tremendous war, it is Germany. She has the power to compel the acceptance of at least a truce, and it depends on Prince Bismarck whether that power will be used. One plain word from him would stop Russia even on the brink of the abyss into which a very little more pressure would make her plunge. Let him only say that Germany will not permit Russia to lant herself on the Danube, and the Czar will find some means, in the vast resources of his despotic power, to stop the rush of Slavonic enthusiasm which is carrying him and the whole world to war. Let Prince Bismarck only speak, and there will be an end of Russian resolutions to occupy Bulgaria.—*T.* Oct. 16th.

> It is with almost inexpressible shame that we read, and know that all Europe will read in one shape or other, the abject entreaty of our leading journal.—*P. M. G.* Oct. 16th.

The definite reply from Russia was received on October 16th.

> We do not think an armistice of six months necessary or favourable to the conclusion of a durable peace, which we desire. We cannot exercise pressure on Servia or Montenegro to make them consent to the uncertainty of their difficult situation being so prolonged. Lastly, we consider that the financial and commercial position of all Europe, already intolerable, would suffer still more from this delay. We must insist (*devons insister*) on an armistice of a month or six weeks, the original proposal of England, subject to its being prolonged if the progress of the negotiations shows it to be necessary.—*Turkey*, i. No. 1877, 800.

Prince Bismarck's reply was received on the 19th and was to the effect—

> that although an armistice of six months appeared to the German Government acceptable, and they would have wished Russia to accept it, they did not think that taking into account the position

they had held till then, they would be justified in exercising a pressure on the resolutions of other Powers.—*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 800.

Thereupon Lord Derby gave up in despair the task of inducing the parties to keep the peace.

> In this state of things, as it was evident that any efforts to bring about the acceptance of the Turkish proposal of a six months' armistice by Servia and Montenegro were checked by the attitude of Russia, Her Majesty's Government felt that further efforts on their part were useless. I therefore informed the Russian Ambassador that having accepted the Turkish proposal for a six months' armistice, Her Majesty's Government were not prepared to withdraw their acceptance or to make any new proposition. I stated, however, that Her Majesty's Government would offer no objection to a shorter term if the Porte were willing to consent to it, but that they would not press the Porte to do so.—*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 800.

But the question still remained, if the Porte should be obstinate and Russia should "insist," was England in that case to treat Russia's action as a *casus belli?* This is the question which we may imagine was discussed and decided at the Cabinet Council which was hastily summoned.[1]

The Cabinet Council met on October 19th. Its decision corresponds, as we shall presently see,[2] to a great revulsion in the feeling out of doors, which had meanwhile once more been wrought up to the expectation of imminent war. What occurred seems to have been something of this sort. It was determined that England should not interpose to keep the peace; if Russia annexed Bulgaria that would touch Austria and Germany much more closely than England, let Austria and Germany see to it. Until Constantinople should be more nearly threatened, English interests did not demand the sacrifice.

This Cabinet Council marks the abandonment, for the time being, by the English Ministers of any further efforts to obtain the remaining part of the twofold aim of Lord Derby's September negotiations. They seem in fact to have adopted the course which Lord Derby three weeks before had put aside as not a

[1] The summonses for the Cabinet Council were issued late on Tuesday evening, Oct. 17th, for three o'clock on Thursday.—*T.* Oct. 19th.
The deliberations of the Ministers at the meeting lasted only two hours and a-half. —*D. N.* Oct. 21st.

[2] *Post*, § 7.

practical one. They washed their hands of the whole affair.[1] They abandoned the policy "Order," much more their faint advance towards "Emancipation," and fell back on "British interests" and "Isolation."

§ 7. *The First Episode.*

a. Erubescence of Public Opinion.—The effects of the negotiations which have just been described, or rather of the public belief as to what was going on, was to cause one of those fits of suspicious and hostile feeling towards Russia which we have ventured to call "Erubescence."[2]

The circumstances may be regarded as an episode chronologically breaking the progress of the Reconciliation. The incident commenced with Servia's refusal to consent to any further mere suspension of hostilities, and came to an end after the Cabinet Council of October 19th, when it was perceived that Russia did not at once proceed to extremities.

The anti-Russian feeling which had been excited by the Servian action and the Russian proposition was not much allayed when on October 3rd or 4th the absolute rejection by Turkey of the English Terms was made known. The *Post* seems to have been alone among the English newspapers in approving the Porte's determination. But even with those who regretted it there was a tendency to treat the Russian proposals as a disturbing element gratuitously introduced where otherwise all might have gone smoothly.

The *Daily News*,[3] to be sure, hopes Russia will take an independent initiative, if by no other means the Porte's obstinacy can be broken down; and, again,[4] it points out that if Russia has been aiming at sinister ends our own Government has been playing into Russia's hands. But the *Pall Mall Gazette*[5] inverts the matter, and attributes Turkish obstinacy to the disturbing effect of the Russian proposals.

Of the two desiderata of the negotiations of September the newspapers supporting the Government allow the ultimate one, the finding a solution, to drop more and more out of sight, and more and more write in the tone of those who take for granted that the end and aim of our diplomacy is to patch up a peace. Thus, a matter that seemed to have been agreed on all hands—namely,

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 426.
[2] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 212.
[3] Oct. 4th.
[4] Oct. 16th.
[5] Oct. 4th.

that the continuance of Turkish oppression would certainly result in Russia's taking up arms—gets somewhat thrown into obscurity again, and the assumption takes its place that Russia in taking up arms could have only one object, the acquisition of Constantinople. Much is made of the question of Russia's "sincerity;" and her "sincerity" seems to be treated as identical with her willingness to forbear from taking up arms to put an end to the *status quo*.

Thus, on many hands, the offer by Turkey of the six months' armistice, which transpired on October 11th, was hailed as amply meeting the necessities of the case. For a few days the *Times* seems to have swung back to a policy of mere "Order." They insist that a breathing time is the only necessity of the moment. They applaud the Turks for being willing to grant a six months' armistice, and though profoundly disappointed that Russia rejects it they return to urging Turkey to grant the armistice for the shorter period.

> The important point is that there should be an armistice at all, that time should be gained, and that Russia, no less than other Powers, should be solemnly pledged for a while to abstain from acting independently in the matter, and to abide, in the first instance, the mature deliberation of Europe. . . . . There is some reason for hoping that the wisdom of the English policy of securing, above all things, a peaceable settlement of this question is beginning to be appreciated on all sides. [If Turkey does not consent to reform—or if others obstruct—Russia will intervene. That is the alternative to a pacific solution.]—*T.* Oct. 12th.
>
> We do not at the present moment abate one jot of the demands which we have persistently put forward for a radical reform of the Turkish Administration, and for the provision of unquestionable guarantees for such reform. . . . . We mean that it is an inversion of all sound principles to make the acceptance and enforcement of the armistice dependent upon the character of the reforms which the Porte may at this moment have proposed.—*T.* Oct. 14th.

As we shall see, in a very few weeks, the *Times* read its recantation, and acknowledged that the reverse of that just stated was the true order of considering the question.[1]

b. The "Return to Sanity."—Meanwhile the newspapers which inclined to the anti-Turkish views deprecate any further urging of Turkey to grant the short armistice, urging that it would be derogatory to England to do so after she had once explained herself satisfied with the armistice of six months. Their tone, too, in

[1] *Post*, § 10.

reference to the Reconciliation undergoes a change. They no longer represent it as the discovery by Public Opinion that it had been mistaken in supposing the Government was hostile to the popular policy, but as a repentance, and a recantation, or a "Return to Sanity," on the part of Public Opinion itself.

They see evidence of this in the result of an attempt to give a fresh impetus to the agitation, which was made about this time by those who disbelieved in the conversion, or whose faith had been shaken by the evident falling into the background of the policy represented by the "English Terms."

Meetings, it is true, continued to be held. Thus the *Times* of Oct. 9th reports a breakfast to two delegates who had arrived from Bulgaria, given by a committee appointed to arrange a public meeting for Westminster, as well as an open-air meeting in Hyde Park, a meeting at James's Hall in the evening, and a meeting convened by the Liberal Association at Stroud.

However, just at this juncture, the meetings seem to have fallen somewhat flat.[1] The effort to obtain a continued strong expression of "violet" opinion was somewhat coldly responded to, and elicited some disapproval in quarters where the "violet" policy generally had been espoused.

At the meeting at St. James's Hall[2] a long letter, many passages of which elicited loud cheers, was read from Mr. Gladstone. He said—

> If I ask what intention and what policy is the British Government engaged in representing before the associated Powers, I am lost in doubt and uncertainty as to the reply. All that, with our limited knowledge, we can say is that it is in all likelihood something materially different from the intention and policy so widely declared by the country. . . . . What we have therefore to fear is that, at the European Council table, the desires of Great Britain lying in one scale, her weight and influence are cast in the other.
>
> [Though the Premier has admitted his views are not those of the people, though the Foreign Minister says Government have nothing to retract or to regret, the Government will not, it seems, by a dissolution, allow the people an opportunity of expressing

[1] The *Times* (Oct. 10th) says of the Hyde Park meeting "as compared with gatherings on the same ground on bygone Saturdays and Sundays, the attendance was not large." It is noted, however, that the weather was very stormy, and that a Monday in autumn was an unfavourable day for an out-door meeting.

[2] It was described as a "second great demonstration of working men." The announced object was "to protest against the temporising conduct of the Government and to renew the demand for an autumn session." Mr. J. Stansfeld, M.P., was in the chair.

their sentence in an authentic manner. If Parliament were promptly convened they might say,—"Why discard the existing Parliament, which has not been convicted of being out of harmony with the people?"—but it is a mockery, if they appeal from a country which has spoken, to a Parliament which is not allowed to speak.] Persistence in a policy apparently condemned by the nation, and not known or sustained by the Parliament, is a course at variance with the spirit and practice of the Constitution. . . . . If I am told that there is no proof of such persistence, I reply that the Government, being called upon to change the principles on which it has acted, has no right to shroud its course in silence, as it might rightly do, if the question were about the application of principles, in themselves approved, to the shifting emergencies of the case. . . . . In conclusion I expect that our information as to the acts of the Government is imperfect. I have construed it to the best of my ability. To no one will it be a greater relief and satisfaction than to me if we find that I am mistaken, and that our Ministers are endeavouring to secure for the three Provinces a real emancipation from a faithless and cruel tyranny.—*Mr. Gladstone's Letter, T.* Oct. 10th.

The English people has come to its senses. It now sees and is awed by the prospect of the gigantic war which English agitators, working upon English compassion, have brought so near. With what feelings it now regards—or will soon come to regard—these agitators we do not at all doubt. Men do not look with affection on guides who have led them to the verge of a precipice. Chief among these guides are Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe.—*P. M. G.* Sept. 30th.

The *Times* remarking upon meetings in Hyde Park and St. James's Hall says that it will be with the greatest regret that the reasonable majority of the public will observe the renewal of efforts to weaken at this critical moment the hands of those who represent us in Europe, and to stimulate a popular excitement. . . . . Mr. Gladstone knows, or might know, that what is at stake at this moment is not so much a final scheme for the settlement of the Bulgarian provinces as the obtaining from the Porte and from Russia such a respite as will enable the terms of such a settlement to be peaceably and maturely debated.—(Oct. 10th.)

The *Standard* cannot be too grateful for the organisers of the two meetings yesterday, for affording conclusive testimony, not only as to the true character of this pro-Russian agitation, but as to its very desperate condition.—(Oct. 10th.)

The *Daily News* thought Mr. Gladstone's letter would do much to sustain and strengthen Public Opinion.—(Oct. 10th.)

In the new phase of the Eastern Question it becomes more difficult to assemble meetings against Turkey. The fear of Russia is at this moment the ruling sentiment, and has almost driven out hatred of the Turk.—*London Correspondent's Letter in South Wales D. N.* Oct. 18th.

c. Charges against the Agitation. — Meanwhile the charges against the agitation were reiterated with increased acrimony. Foremost among them was the old antithesis between sentiment and policy. The *Pall Mall Gazette* was never tired of insisting that to give play to such motives as those on which they said the agitation was based, was to invite national destruction.

> We Englishmen have an empire on which we are accustomed to say in our cups that the sun never sets, and of which some of us, to repeat Macaulay's phrase, have been as proud as the Athenian of the City of the Violet Crown. But, during the last half-century this empire, critically placed through its enormous extension, has been menaced by a great and ever-growing danger. We, like the Athenian, have our man of Macedon. A great Power in the North has emerged from barbarism almost within living human memory, which, after threatening for many years every country which copied our constitutional and religious liberties, now distinctly threatens our territory. . . . . Till the other day we were negotiating for a continuance of the advantage secured to us by the Alma and Inkerman, with the best hopes of successes. But all of a sudden a strange danger showed itself. The Bravo case had long filled the columns of the newspapers with daily masses of elaborate prurient detail; but it at last came to an end, to the delight of all decent men. Almost immediately, however, one of these newspapers became filled with minute accounts of brutalities committed by wild irregular troops in a half-barbarous country. . . . . A new and wholly unexpected weakness in our national panoply at once disclosed itself. Our Macedonian need not be at the trouble of intriguing and bribing. He has only to spread stories of the way in which Thracians, Illyrians, Thessalians, and Epirots treat the women and children of the villages they capture, and to keep back the fact that his own generals systematically enjoin the same conduct on his own troops. At once there is a tremendous explosion, and the whole city is at the feet of Philip. Phocion takes to the stump. Æschines clamours for the convocation of the Assembly. It is, however, to be allowed that neither the Athenian Phocion nor the Athenian Æschines was the actual author or adviser of a Macedonian war —that marvellous scandal has been reserved for our own country and our own day. . . . . No doubt the recent proceedings of the English people do the greatest credit to the national heart; but if they mean as much as some people say, they are the proceedings of a people unfit for empire.—*P. M. G.* Oct. 3rd.

> The weak point in the temperament of England is now fully disclosed. It is an incontinence of sympathy, showing itself by hysterical sobs and cries. . . . . Among the minor signs of recovery is a growing comprehension of the true place of the Bulgarian atrocities, amid the phenomenon of human life which

> the world exhibits as it is now constituted. The general blindness to the vast political dangers growing in the East, which till within the last few days prevailed in this country, was caused by a confused idea that somehow or other, if Russia were to occupy European Turkey or to become preponderant there, there would be an end of "atrocities." We know better now. There would be a continuance of them, but the victims would be different. The British Empire would be brought to the verge of destruction, but the materials for sentimental indignation would be as abundant as ever.—*P. M. G.* Oct. 17th.[1]

From a somewhat different point of view those that took part in the agitation were accused of indifference to all considerations of the welfare of their country or of mankind provided they could score an advantage for their party. They were charged with weakening the hands of their country's diplomacy, of which diplomacy peace was now represented as the sole aim. It was said the agitation encouraged Russia and Servia, and endangered peace—and this soon took the form of an accusation that the aim of the agitation was to stir up a gigantic war. The humane sentiment is called into the field, against the agitation.

It is urged that Russia is not the agency that has the right or the power to act as a deliverer.[2]

The rhetorical utterances of anti-Turkism are denounced as outrages on humanity.

The argument is constantly repeated that the "violet" position implies war, and Christian men are adjured to take no step that shall precipitate such horrors.

In an "Imaginary Cogitation," the *Pall Mall Gazette*,[3] appeals to those whom it suspects of a secret longing, scarce acknowledged to themselves, for a crusade.

> There's small chance enough of *this* Government striking a blow for the Greek Christians. Lord Beaconsfield—well, Lord Beaconsfield deserves all I said of him last Sunday week; and as for Derby, he'd drive a nail through the head of any prostrate Christian in the world to give the land rest for forty years. Ah, if Salisbury now were in the place he should be, what mightn't we do! His appointment to represent us at the Conference is the first bit of good news we've had for weeks. But I fear he won't be able to do much. No, there's nothing for it, I'm afraid, but to sit down under our humiliation and wait for Russia to strike the blow that we dare not strike—the blow that shall sweep the

[1] Art. entitled "The Competition of Barbarism."
[2] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 163.
[3] "The Rev. Orient Churchward in his study."

accursed infidels out of Europe. . . . Do I *wish* for war,—I, a Christian minister? God forbid! I trust not. Nay I know that I do not. It would be weakness to harbour such a suspicion of myself for an instant. It is by playing on such misgivings in our hearts that the Gallios hope to silence us. "You are working for war!" they cry. "You are working for war! You are hounding on mankind to the most hideous of human conflicts—a religious war!" . . . Pooh! we're not going to have war at all; that's certain now. The Turk will give way, the oppressed populations will get their reforms, and everybody will be satisfied. Nobody in England asks more than that, and it is a calumny to say so of any Englishman, be he High Church or Low. There's no religious question about the matter; it's political from first to last.—*P. M. G.* Nov. 9th.

d. Second "War in the Air."—The reaction is marked by the reappearance of a feature which seems to carry us back, at a bound, to the position at the early days of July. Notwithstanding the earnest and positive reiterations of the *Times* that under no circumstances would England interfere to protect Turkey, the suggestion re-emerges that, in the event of the Porte's not giving way, England would be concerned to resist any Russian attack. This surmise very quickly gained great currency, and in some quarters it was treated as a matter of course. Towards the end of the third week in October and especially during the few days immediately preceding the meeting of the Cabinet, it was believed that a Russian declaration of war against Turkey was imminent, and there were not a few who thought that this would be immediately followed by an English declaration of war against Russia.

Perhaps it might even be war against the Holy Alliance, for Austria, a power whose exact position was always rather mysterious, seems to have been now regarded in some quarters as likely to fill the *rôle* of Russia's ally,[1] rather than that which Lord Derby was fond of attributing to her. This latter somewhat resembled that of an obdurate partner in the background, who would not consent to a solution which would satisfy Russia and which Lord Derby, so far as he was concerned, would be glad enough to concede. The air was filled with warlike rumours. Diplomacy had, it was

[1] The *Spectator* (Oct. 21st) speaks of the Hapsburgs as clearly inclined to join Russia instead of fighting her; and of the possibility of Austria's claiming a share of the spoil. The difficulty with regard to Austria's position appears to hinge on her being extremely opposed to particular developments of the "violet" policy, and at the same time in favour of insisting on putting a curb on the Turkish power in the Christian provinces.

believed, said its last word. There was a two days' scare. Once more war was "in the air."

> There is a certain political atmosphere in which coming war may, as it were, be felt like the thunderstorm on a sultry, stifling day. There is a certain paralysis of diplomacy, an impotence to effect any definite purpose, a vain striving, like that of one in a dream, after something that seems close yet always evades the grasp, which indicates that the settlement lies beyond the sphere of negotiation.—*T.* Oct. 18th.

> It will be a matter of common sense to await the result of these deliberations [*i.e.* of the Cabinet] before giving credence to the less authentic statements which are in circulation. It is said the Government have called upon Lloyd's to supply instantly a list of seagoing steamers capable of conveying troops, and that contingent contracts for their hire will be forthwith entered into. Lord Napier of Magdala, now the Governor of Gibraltar, is said to have been ordered to hold himself in readiness at some convenient spot in the Mediterranean, from which he may at any moment be directed to proceed with troops to Egypt. Confidential orders—which, if confidential, are scarcely likely to have been immediately made public—are reported to have been given by the War Office to the Commander-in-Chief to hold three Army Corps in readiness for immediate despatch to the Mediterranean. We hear, again, that plans for the defence of Constantinople, prepared by the Royal Engineers and approved by the War Office, have been forwarded to the Admiral of the Fleet in Besika Bay. Lastly, as a necessary accompaniment of all this, we are told that the Government have determined to hold an Autumnal Session of Parliament.—*T.* Oct. 19th.

> The threatening aspect of the Eastern situation produced a marked effect yesterday in a quarter to which many people still look for indications of the political future. A violent panic prevailed almost without intermission throughout the day on the Stock Exchange; and a similar alarm seems to have been felt upon some of the Continental Bourses. . . . It also seems tolerably clear that yesterday's panic was intensified by an apprehension that England herself was about to declare war; an apprehension fed by rumours very alarming and quite without authority.—*P. M. G.* Oct. 19th.

e. Collapse of the bellicose adherents of the Government.—The next day the threatening storm seemed to have passed off as suddenly as it had gathered.

> There is to be no *ultimatum* or a contingent declaration of war. There is, moreover, to be no Autumn Session. In other words, the Cabinet did nothing which can justify the prevailing fears of a British participation in the war. It will be readily

understood that this result does not involve any positive decision with respect to events which are still uncertain and a position which will change continually. It amounts only to this, that the existence of a virtual war between Russia and the Porte does not of itself create a state of things which calls for our interference, that we are not called upon either by the text of Treaties or by any moral obligation to defend one of the two Empires against the other. Whether at any time any British interest will be so compromised in the conflict as to call for action on our part is a matter which must be considered when the occasion arises, and with regard to which the Government and nation will reserve to themselves full liberty of action.

Such an attitude will commend itself to the good sense of the country.—*T.* Oct. 20th.

One thing is, we trust, quite clear to them. The English nation will never again fight for the maintenance of the Mohammedan Empire in Europe, whether on its own account, or simply as a means to an end. On this point the language which we occasionally hear, and which is intended to be reassuring, is not sufficiently explicit. We are told with ample copiousness and with the most earnest emphasis, that a war for the sake of maintaining the Ottoman Empire in Europe is out of the question. No statesman or party would for a moment think of it. But what we want to impress on the Government, if they need the lesson, is that England ought never again, and we believe will never again, consent to take part in a war which, whatever its pretext or ultimate aim—whether the maintenance of the balance of Europe, or the resistance of Russian aggression, or the preservation of English interests in the East—shall have as an incident, or if the word be preferred, an accident, military alliance with the Turk.—*D. N.* Oct. 20th.

As soon as the decision of the Cabinet was announced there was something like a collapse of a bellicose section who had posed as the most devoted adherents of the Government, and who had begun once more confidently to assume that the honour and interests of England would demand her to take part in the defence of Turkey. At the same time the fact was noted that Russia did not take advantage of England's abstention to invade the Turkish provinces.

In the last week of October there was a considerable decline of anti-Russism. With this, and with the falling back of the Cabinet and their supporters in the press upon the policy of Isolation and mere "British Interests" the first episode comes to an end, and the temporary impediment being removed the Reconciliation proceeded.

§ 8. *The Agitation rehabilitated.*

a. The lost Opportunity returns.—After the Cabinet Council of October 19th, it was seen with a sense of surprised relief, that Russia instead of declaring war, renewed her demand for an immediate short armistice.

Soon an impression got abroad that the Porte had yielded to General Ignatieff's pressure, and that the armistice between the Turkish and Servian forces had been actually arranged.[1]

Men's hopes rose high, and the slight cloud of doubt which had come over the "violet" policy in many minds was dispelled.

It was thought that the Cabinet Council of October 19th had marked the overruling of the influences (embodied in Lord Beaconsfield) hostile to the "violet" policy and that the effort to press a solution in concert with Russia would be resumed, with a better prospect, perhaps, of an effective co-operation than ever before.

It was not at all recognised how completely the English Government had for the time being washed their hands of the matter, and long before November 4th it seems to have been assumed that they were acting, as in fact then, but not apparently before, they did again begin to act.

> In the pause which is now imposed upon their action the Government will, we trust, reconsider the position in which they are placed. Howsoever they may distribute the blame of the result, the fact must be clear to them that their diplomacy has failed.—*D. N.* Oct. 20th.
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> Lord Beaconsfield's plan of an alliance with the Moslem Empire having failed, the time has come for the adoption of what twelve years ago was the policy of Lord Derby, and what twelve months ago, if he had been left to himself, would, we believe, have been his policy. Let him go back to the proposal of Prince Gortschakoff unfortunately rejected in June last, for the creation of vassal and tributary States.—*D. N.* Oct. 21st.
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> For ourselves, we hold that if the English Cabinet were to quit its newly-assumed attitude of observation, and to join with Russia in urging its ultimatum on Turkey, it would be pursuing a wise course. . . . It would hardly be much of a gain to get rid of the Turk in the South of Europe if we were to have the Russian planted there in his stead. This is a danger which, it seems to us, might be formidable if Russia were alone in any enterprise directed against Turkey. . . . For this reason we think that

[1] Lord Derby himself was, on Oct. 30th, under the impression ; see despatch of that date, *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 800.

England should, though we have little hope that under the present Government she will, join in Russia's proposals.—*D. N.* Oct. 23rd.

There is, perhaps, a danger that the unreasonable alarms of last week may be succeeded by unreasonable hopes; but it is evident that we need not despair of seeing the crisis in the East pass away without an outbreak of hostilities between Russia and Turkey.—*T.* Oct. 23rd.

The *Times* intimates that the English Ambassador Lord Loftus had been sent to Livadia, where the Czar then was, to inquire as to the limits and character of the proposed occupation.—(Oct. 24th.)

We are glad to believe that the Government, having failed in all its own projects, is beginning to see the necessity of co-operating with Russia in measures for the relief of the insurgent provinces from Turkish misrule. Lord Augustus Loftus will represent, we hope, a real, though grudgingly acknowledged, change of policy at Livadia. . . . Influences within the Cabinet of a worthier kind than those which have until lately been predominant have tended to move it timidly in the direction indicated by Mr. Gladstone, whose privilege it is to be abused and obeyed.—*D. N.* Oct. 26th.

Although Ministers have of late been treated with the greatest consideration by those who are compelled strongly to disapprove of their policy, they must not imagine that the mighty voice which spoke unmistakably last August will not be raised again should the public interest require it. As Mr. Shaw Lefevre said at Reading on Tuesday, the little that the Government has done in compliance with the declared will of the country has been taken at its full value by a generously disposed people.—*D. N.* Nov. 2nd.

It would seem as if a merciful fortune had once more given the direction of events into the hands of Ministers and Ambassadors, with the caution to be wiser this time. Now may be done what might have been done a year ago, or six months ago. The lost opportunity returns—a thing rare in human affairs. Accusation and apology about the past may cease, for the Governments have been taught by events, they have been roused by criticism, and it is in their power that all shall end well.—*T.* Nov. 6th.

b. Ministerial "Dii minores" unheeded.—The utterances which came from some of the supporters of the Government at this juncture were not, to be sure, calculated to strengthen the impression that the Government were about to move in the direction indicated; but the fact is, people were inclined to pay very little attention to what was said in this way; and even in the case of Cabinet Ministers, something of the same tendency was noticeable.

It would be interesting to know what Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby think of their humble friends—the *Dii minores* of the Conservative Party—who are now sounding their praises on many platforms. Nothing could be better adapted to revive the temper which is now quiescent than the declamations of Ministerial apologists. The dispassionate reader who looks at them can only wonder. Indignation meetings have ceased because they have done their work, and the Conservative gatherings now being held could not undo what has been done, even were an attempt made to use them for that purpose. If there appeared any danger of our drifting into armed hostility, there would be a revival of national energy effectual to neutralise it. The language even of Ministerial supporters points to what has become the true policy of the Ministry—to use all their power and influence to induce an acceptance by the Porte of terms of peace corresponding to the necessities of the case. To give reparation to the Christians of the East for the wrongs they have suffered, and to protect them from the repetition of such barbarities—these two objects were expressed in the Report of yesterday's Conference [1] at Manchester as the sum of the policy of the Government, and Mr. Gladstone himself might confess that he desired no more.—*T.* Oct. 26th.

Mr. Cross, speaking at Manchester, on the occasion of the opening of a new Conservative Club, told his audience that so far from having the key of the Eastern Question, the only key which he had in his possession was the key of the room. At the same time, his words pointed to an effort on the part of the Government to find a solution in the "violet" direction.

To any reasonable extent which the treaty would bear he accepted the moral obligation which rested on this country to see that the oppressed people of Turkey should have protection in any shape we could give it them. (Applause.) But when they looked at that Treaty, instead of help they found hindrances. What had been proposed by Lord Derby was the only possible solution of this matter.—*Mr. Cross at Manchester*, Oct. 26th.

If we had no light upon the present policy of the Ministry beyond that afforded by Mr. Cross's speech, the people of the country would rise from its perusal with a feeling of deep disappointment. [The speech is one of those] tedious and feeble complaints of difficulties on every side of which we have already had far too much. But we believe the Home Secretary has not done justice to the advance that has been made by the Government of

[1] The tenth annual meeting of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations held in the Town Hall, Manchester. The Council expressed "a strong feeling of indignation at the unpatriotic conduct of the Radical section of the Liberal party in the recent agitation." The Council felt sure the Government "had done all that could be done to secure reparation for the wrongs inflicted upon the Christians, to protect them in future, and to maintain peace and uphold the honour of the British Empire."—*T.* Oct. 26th

which he is a member. Lord Derby is perhaps no less conscious of difficulty now than formerly, but the pressure of events has led him to face what he would gladly have avoided. . . . . The arduous exertions to which Mr. Cross referred show that the Foreign Secretary has turned his back upon the course he formerly adopted, and we hope that the new departure from his policy will be rewarded with a success which will unite the whole nation in gratitude to him.—*T.* Oct. 27th.

The speech of Sir Stafford Northcote, which followed shortly afterwards, belongs to the same category.

> The spectacle of successive Cabinet Ministers—to-day the Chancellor of the Exchequer, yesterday the Home Secretary, to-morrow, perhaps, Mr. Hunt—shaking their heads over the perplexities of their position reminds us of nothing so much as of that Elector of Brandenburg, commemorated by Mr. Carlyle, who went about while the enemy was approaching his gates murmuring, "*Que faire? Ils ont des canons.*" Some galvanic stroke of fate seems wanted to quicken their intelligence and their courage. We return to Sir Stafford Northcote's closing sentences. He admitted that the Ministers of the Crown must be responsible to Parliament and the nation, but he protested that the present Ministers did not intend to modify their policy in deference to any manifestation of public opinion. When we couple this with Lord Derby's expressed anxiety to know what his employers thought of his policy, we may well say "the gods are hard to reconcile." Happily, we know as a matter of fact that the Foreign Minister has modified his course of action subsequently to the striking manifestation of English opinion on the character of the Turkish government of the outlying Provinces, though as a matter of course we cannot speak positively of the motive which induced Lord Derby to abandon the policy of absolute non-intervention to which he so long clung. Nor can we pretend to say that the Ministry have been under no temptation to fall back on their former position after the new departure ensuing when the Czar cut short the protracted hesitation of the Porte by presenting an *ultimatum* and extracting an armistice by his independent representation. We believe there has been no backsliding. The policy of the proposals of the 21st of September has been at least maintained, and we are not without some assurance that it has undergone that development which the pressure of events compels. But we know how easily misconceptions arise, and since the Chancellor of the Exchequer goes so far to confirm Mr. Lowe's apprehensions of the indocility of the Ministry, and Lord Beaconsfield's utterances can always be read in two ways, it is well that we should know exactly where we are.—*T.* Nov. 14th.

c. The Servian defeat and the Russian ultimatum.—Meanwhile the easy belief that the fighting had been brought to an end turned out to be the fiction of a fool's paradise.

> While General Ignatieff was exchanging ideas with ambassadors, indicating his demands upon the Porte and preparing for a solemn interview with the Sultan, the Turkish Minister of War was urging the commander of the Sultan's troops to strike a rapid and decisive blow. He was obeyed. The Turkish forces had recently been reinforced by several thousand men; the General had the means of a prompt advance, and we may suppose that he hardly needed to be told the importance of it. The Turks attacked and gained the great success which made them, in a military sense, masters of Servia. The works at Djunis were captured; as a consequence, Alexinatz has fallen into the hands of the Turks; and to-day there comes a report of the occupation of Deligrad. —*T.* Nov. 3rd.

The great battle and Turkish victory of Djunis (Oct. 28th-30th) brought Europe face to face with the question what was to be done in prospect of the Turks overrunning Servia and entering Belgrade. The Russian answer was immediate. General Ignatieff presented an ultimatum, demanding the acceptance of an armistice within forty-eight hours—and the Russian demand was immediately acceded to.

The announcement in England on Oct. 31st that an ultimatum was to be presented, created a flutter of excitement. The *Times*[1] speaks of the Russian demand as bearing at first sight an alarming aspect. Another period of erubescence might have set in, but the conclusion of the armistice followed too quickly.[2]

There were two lights in which these events were regarded in England. On the one hand it was asserted that the truce had been virtually agreed to when the news of the great Turkish victory arrived at Constantinople.

> The feelings of his people, as well as his own interests, may have compelled the Czar to address the recent ultimatum to the Porte; and that ultimatum would have been none the less sent even if, as we believe, the armistice had been at the moment on the point of signature. To despatch it at such a moment would be, as is remarked this morning, *enfoncer une porte ouverte;* but there are occasions when a Power like Russia may find it necessary to assert its dignity by "forcing an open door."—*P. M. G.* Nov. 1st.

On the other hand, the idea of Servia brought under Turkish rule again—much more of Servia at the mercy of Bashi-Bazouks and of Belgrade exposed to the fate of Batak—was felt to be

[1] Nov. 1st.
[2] It was announced in the *Times* of Nov. 3rd.

intolerable, and there was a sense of relief that such a catastrophe should have been averted.

> All Europe is practically at the back of Servia for the purpose of resisting Turkish domination.—*T.* Nov. 2nd.

d. Lord Derby again propounds the "English Terms."—One of the two questions to which the negotiations had been directed, namely, that of the armistice, having been thus disposed of during the withdrawal of the English Government from active participation, Russia renewed the invitation to England to participate in the other question, and to resume the effort to arrive at a solution.

The Russian ambassador spoke in this sense to Lord Derby on November 2nd,[1] and on the same day the Czar was holding similar language to Lord Loftus at Yalta. But this was not all:

> His Majesty expressed his anxious desire for an understanding and co-operation with England. He hoped that the unjust suspicions entertained in England of his policy would be discarded. He pledged his honour that he had no views of conquest or of Constantinople, and repeated this declaration several times, and in the most solemn manner. All he required was the amelioration of the position of the Christians, but not resting on Turkish promises, in which he had no reliance, but on real efficient guarantees. He said the treaty of 1856 replaced a Russian by a European Protectorate of the Christians, and since then Europe had not fulfilled this duty. He wished to maintain the European concert, but if Europe remained passive he would be obliged to act alone. He could not understand why there should not be a complete understanding between England and Russia when they had a common aim, and when he gave the most sacred assurances of his disinterested policy.—*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 835.[2]

On November 4th Lord Derby addressed a circular to the various English ambassadors which marks the taking up by the English Government of the position which the popular apprehension, a little in advance, as we have seen, of the actual facts, had beforehand ascribed to it. In this despatch Lord Derby proposed that a Conference should be forthwith held at Constantinople, upon the basis of the "English Terms" for Turkey, coupled with what may be called a Self-denying Ordinance for the guaranteeing Powers.

[1] *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 829.

[2] This important despatch was telegraphed by Lord Loftus, and was received Nov. 2nd at night.

Her Majesty's Government further submit as the basis for the deliberations of the Conference—

1. The independence, and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

2. A declaration that the Powers do not intend to seek for any territorial advantages, any exclusive influence, or any concession with regard to the commerce of their subjects which those of every other nation may not equally obtain.

This declaration was made on September 17th, 1840, in the Protocol for the pacification of the Levant, and again August 3rd, 1860, in regard to the pacification of Syria.

3. The bases of pacification proposed to the Porte on September 21st.—*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 873.[1]

e. Lord Hartington endorses the Agitation.—The Marquis of Hartington was one of those who took the opportunity of the vacation to visit the East. He returned towards the end of October, and it was understood that he came back convinced that Mr. Gladstone was in the main right.

We have already noted that his speech at Keighley, on November 3rd, marks an important stage in the process by which the question became a party one.[2] It also marks an important stage in the rehabilitation of the Agitation. It was tantamount to a notification that the official leaders of the Liberal party had abandoned any legalistic theory that the European Powers were precluded from stepping in between the Porte and their Christian subjects. Moreover, it said that it was the Agitation itself which had brought Lord Derby to acquiesce in the same view (if, indeed, he did frankly acquiesce in it), and that it was desirable that Public Opinion should continue to press upon Lord Derby, lest he should relapse into his old position. Thus the tendency of this speech was to reassure and confirm in their original belief in the soundness of the "violet" policy, some whom the recent fit of "erubescence" had affected with doubts; and to justify others, who

[1] The Russian Government at first objected to the word "territorial" in article No. 1, on the grounds that it excluded the possibility of an occupation, which they considered would still be necessary (No. 891), and that its omission would enable a cession of territory to be made to Montenegro (No. 884). Lord Derby appears to have intimated to the Russian ambassador in London that as the English Government had refused the idea of occupation, the renewal of the proposal would cause them to break off the Conference (No. 895). On the other point, he pointed out that the expression "territorial integrity" was taken from the Treaty of Paris, and expressed his opinion that from the nature of the relations existing between the Porte and Montenegro, this expression would not exclude any frontier arrangements with Montenegro which the Porte might be disposed to concede (No. 895). The Russian objection was waived and the English programme accepted *tel quel* (No. 917).

[2] *Ante*, p. 48.

felt some misgiving lest the charge brought against them should be well founded—the charge of hampering the Government in a course which, after all, was aiming at a solution which would embody all that reasonable men desired.

It is significant of the manner in which constitutional questions were gradually coming to the front, that the Marquis of Hartington commenced his speech at Keighley, by touching on the curious way in which Ministers had neglected Parliament, and made use of other means of discussion and the expression of opinion.

> It is true, and it is somewhat remarkable, that they seem to have preferred to speak about them in almost every place but the House of Parliament, which is the place in which British statesmen are accustomed to express their opinions. Even while Parliament was sitting it is a remarkable fact that Lord Derby preferred to make an expression of his opinions on the Eastern Question in reply to a deputation which he saw at the Foreign Office rather than in his place in the House of Lords.
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> [Everything pointed to the conclusion that Turkey could not afford adequate security and protection to her Christian subjects.] . . . Does it not follow, I say, if all this be the case, that it is necessary that we should go beyond the promises of the Porte, and that we should in some way or other, be it more or less, apply some external and foreign interference in order to secure the good Government and protection which Turkey herself is unable to provide? I want to show you that Europe has been slowly coming to this opinion. I want to show you that up to a very recent period our Government had not come to that opinion, and I want to show you that if it has come to that opinion now it is very doubtful whether it has embraced it frankly and fully, and whether without some pressure from you it is prepared to act fully upon it. . . . I may say that I was not astonished or that I at all regret the outburst of indignation that occurred on the receipt of the news of these atrocities. (Loud cheers.) Then for the first time the eyes of England were opened to the real character of the Government of Turkey. Up to that time the majority of us had been rejoicing rather than otherwise in having gained what was considered a diplomatic triumph. We had done something to foil the designs of the enemies of Turkey and to preserve and uphold the traditional policy of England; but all of a sudden these Bulgarian massacres and horrors came upon the public like a revelation, and opened their eyes to the true character of the Government we had supported. . . . [Lord Derby's declaration at the Foreign Office, September 27th, that what had happened had changed the position][1] was the first intimation of his departing from the policy to which he had resolutely adhered up to that date. For the first time shortly after that date there appeared in Lord Derby's

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 427.

policy an inclination to assent to the opinion of the rest of Europe that some direct interference was necessary. Now, gentlemen, it is of great importance to consider whether the Government are prepared to act frankly upon that change of policy or not. Upon that depends a great deal. So far as I am able to gather, Lord Derby appears to have changed the policy of the Government after the agitation about what had occurred in Bulgaria. [The proposals attributed to Lord Derby, namely, (1) to establish an administrative autonomy in the Turkish provinces (which he had rejected when proposed in the summer by the Russian ambassador), and (2) that Turkey should embody the concessions it was then prepared to make in a protocol, were great changes in the policy of the Government, and were concessions to the principle of direct interference by Europe.] It remains to be explained why if these were the proposals of the English Government they were not pressed with energy. . . . I think if the Government was deluded by that proposal of the Turks for a six months' armistice they were returning to or still hankering after their old policy, and had not frankly abandoned it, as the only true policy to be adopted. . . .

There are various forms of external foreign intervention, some more effective in the opinion of many, and some more stringent than others; but what I think we ought to keep in view, and the great distinction which we ought to bear in mind, is that intervention of the mildest kind by any single Power is fraught with the greatest possible danger to the peace of Europe, but that intervention even of a much more stringent character if made by the unanimous consent of the whole of Europe, although it too may have its dangers and difficulties, is still a far less dangerous course to be adopted. (Loud cheers.) [At Constantinople he had been struck with the belief of the Turkish officials that England, out of jealousy of Russia, would in the end be found on their side.] Now, gentlemen, that I believe to be the opinion which really exists at the bottom of the hearts of a great many Turkish statesmen. It is a very dangerous frame of mind for Turkish statesmen to be in. [Yet] are they to be blamed if they think their safest inspiration will be derived from the mouth of the Prime Minister himself? I say let Lord Derby write whatever despatches he pleases; let Sir Henry Elliot make whatever representations he pleases at the Porte, and then let Lord Beaconsfield afterwards get up and make one of his speeches in which he denounces vehemently the enemies of Turkey, in which he denounces in unmeasured terms English statesmen who have committed no crime of which I am aware (loud cheers), except that of expressing their own warm and strong opinions, and representing the warm and strong opinions of a great portion of their fellow-countrymen, I say let Lord Beaconsfield get up and make one of his speeches, and talk in terms more or less clear about the interests of England; and I say that the interpretation put on such a speech in Constantinople is that when Lord Beaconsfield speaks of the interests

of England he is thinking of the intrigues of Russia. Let Lord Derby write as he may, it will be believed in Turkey that the policy of England is still what it has always been, and that, come what may, when the struggle comes England will be still at her back. Gentlemen, I say, if it is true, let the Ministry of England disabuse the Turkish Government of any such idea; let them tell Turkey, in terms which cannot be mistaken, that England has no interest in the continued misgovernment of the subject races of Turkey.—*Lord Hartington at Keighley*, Nov. 4th.

Nothing could be clearer than Lord Hartington's repudiation of the active "red" policy, or of the doctrine which precluded the European Powers in concert from stepping in; but it was not so clear what would be Lord Hartington's view of the expediency or otherwise of England's supporting Russia, apart from the other Powers, in an active "violet" policy.

[Mr. Forster and Mr. Gladstone having been paraded against one another as the authors of rival and discordant policies it has happened that men waited for Lord Hartington's speech of yesterday to see on which side he would pronounce.] Lord Hartington fastens on the ultimate and immediate cause of the troubles which have convulsed Europe in these later months in the misgovernment of Turkey and the chronic insecurity of her Christian subjects. Here is the evil, and is it within the power of Turkey to remedy it? Lord Hartington answers this question almost in the words, and altogether in the spirit, of the speech of Mr. Gladstone delivered in the House of Commons upon Mr. Bruce's motion just before the prorogation of Parliament. The Turk has shown himself not so much unwilling as impotent to make any change for good in the practice of his administration of subject Provinces. . . . The impossibility of procuring the removal of that cause of disturbance from the unassisted hands of the Turks is demonstrated; and there remains no alternative but the application in some way or other of "external and foreign interference" to introduce and maintain that condition of equal, just, and secure government without which there can be no restoration of peace deserving our confidence. This is the conclusion to which Lord Hartington has come. It is the conclusion to which the mind of the nation has come.—*T.* Nov. 4th.

Lord Hartington gains ground as a leader with every speech he makes, and the speech of last week at Keighley will do more to convince all sections of the Liberal party that they may trust him, than any previous political act of his since he first assumed the leadership of the Opposition in the House of Commons. We are aware that Lord Hartington does not go the full length of Mr. Gladstone. . . . We ought not, perhaps, to expect from the leader of the Opposition more than a very lucid and discriminating expression of the average opinion in the party which he leads.

. . . Now precisely such a speech Lord Hartington seems to us to have made. . . . The very dubious sound of such manifestoes as that of the Duke of Cleveland and that of Lord George Cavendish—the Marquis of Hartington's uncle—had made a serious split in the Liberal ranks seemed but too probable, and this Lord Hartington's moderate but firm and clear exposition of principle has done a great deal to prevent. Even Whig magnates will think twice before separating themselves from a policy of principle so coherent, so moderate, and yet so exceedingly sensible as Lord Hartington's. . . With the line which he took about Russia we are not equally well satisfied, but there, again, we are quite content that he should take the line which doubtless best expresses the convictions of the majority of his followers. He made it one of the set-offs against the advantages of Mr. Gladstone's campaign, that the impression produced by it in Russia was that Russia would now be at liberty, without any interference from England, to intervene alone in the Eastern Question, and to settle it in her own way. . . . It was essential for the country to pronounce distinctly that it regarded Russian interference as a far less evil than no interference at all. Without making that clear, the people would not have made themselves in the least intelligible to the Government. The whole pro-Turkish party was continually crying out that if we did not support Turkey, we should have a great Russian aggrandisement. It was clearly necessary to reply that though we wished for no great Russian aggrandisement, though we objected to it, and saw no reason for it if only the European Powers would act in concert, we considered that evil a far less one than the restitution of the iniquitous *status quo*. And as we have said, we understand Lord Hartington himself to concur in this.—*Spec.* Nov. 11th.

f. Lord Salisbury's Appointment confirms the Belief in the Conversion.—The notion that Public Opinion was just able by great exertions to turn the Government into the right direction, and to overcome an inveterate tendency to relapse into their old course the moment the efforts of Public Opinion were relaxed, is eminently characteristic of the whole of the Reconciliation Period.

The Government itself has, however tardily, accepted [the conclusion that no alternative remained but some external interference]; but there are temptations to fall away from and forget it, and it thus becomes necessary that Public Opinion should exercise a pressure upon the Government so that it shall carry out with energy and completeness the policy to which it has finally consented. The Foreign Office has been dragging back at every stage of the past, and from the Consular Mission downwards it has been necessary to overcome Lord Derby's constitutional reluctance to intervene between Turkey and its misgoverned subjects. . . . With what steadiness and with how much of zeal will the Foreign Secretary pursue the new path which has been traced out for

him? If he is resolute in supporting the policy which insists upon substantial guarantees being given for the freedom of the disturbed Provinces from the evil administration to which they have been so long exposed, he may rest assured of the support of the nation; but as the nation supports him upon this condition, so it may be expected to be instant in pressing it upon him.—*T.* Nov. 4th.

But an incident now occurred which seemed to show that the reluctance of the Government had at last been overcome.

The appointment of Lord Salisbury as special ambassador to act as joint plenipotentiary with Sir Henry Elliot in the Conference was taken as an unequivocal indication that Lord Beaconsfield had been overruled in the Cabinet, and that a "violet" solution was to be seriously pressed. It was hailed with a burst of satisfaction which marks an important advance in the progress of the Reconciliation.

An announcement of extraordinary importance is made this morning. Lord Salisbury is to represent England at the approaching Conference on the Eastern Question. [In making this choice the Cabinet have to an unusual degree placed the conduct of the negotiation out of their own hands into those of one of its members. The members of the Cabinet have different minds, and speak with different views.] We observe that the appointment is hailed with satisfaction by the whole of the London press; but not for the same reasons. [The writer finds reasons for receiving the appointment with satisfaction, but, on the other hand, he gives weight to the consideration suggested above. Moreover,] whereas it seems to us of deep importance that religious prejudices and religious fervours should be left at the door of the Conference, we know from the whole course of Lord Salisbury's history that they cannot be absent wherever he appears.—*P. M. G.* Nov. 8th.

[Lord Salisbury's] own utterance on the subject has, in fact, been far more in harmony with the national feeling than the declarations made by any of his colleagues, with the exception of Lord Carnarvon. He has never apparently been fascinated or, overawed by Lord Beaconsfield. . . . It is no longer [the Government's] sole business to dissuade other Powers from essaying to remove evils which they themselves would not touch with so much as their little finger. For this Sir Henry Elliot might very well suffice. They have no choice but to make a nobler effort than this; and we take Lord Salisbury's appointment as a sign that they appreciate their task.—*D. N.* Nov. 8th.

The scarcely-concealed hostility with which this appointment has been received by the more independent supporters of the policy of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby discloses its real character.—*D. N.* Nov. 10th.

> We congratulate the country upon the event of the week. . . . Lord Salisbury is no henchman of Lord Beaconsfield to begin with. . . . We shall not, at all events, be committed to a directly anti-Christian policy, nor, if it is left to Lord Salisbury, will the policy be one which concedes everything except guarantees. His instincts are on the side of realities. . . . He is not likely, therefore, if he desires, as we should not doubt from his antecedents, to protect the Christians, to be content with any compromise which does not take the power of taxation and the right of garrison, as well as direct administration, out of Turkish hands. . . . If he consents to plans which will insure a renewal of insurrection in a year or two, and which will compel the South Slavonians, with all their instinctive dislike to Russia—a dislike conspicuous throughout all recent events in Servia—still to rely on the Czar as the only friend who understands their situation, he will have failed, and will have lost the grandest chance ever given since 1815 to a British statesman. There are literally no obstacles in his way, if we except the predilection of Lord Beaconsfield. . . . There are no obstacles to be feared from the Opposition at home, for the Liberals all desire the final emancipation of the Christians, though all are not equally ready to make sacrifices to obtain it; and there are very few to be dreaded in the ranks of the party just now unhappily in power. . . . If the Cabinet made war for Turkey, the Liberals would exert themselves to the uttermost for their overthrow; but if the Cabinet gave up Turkey, the Tories would support them as strongly as ever, would declare that the only wise policy, and would taunt the Liberals with their determined misrepresentations of ministerial meaning. They always intended, everybody would assure us, to secure the virtual independence of the Christian Provincials, and only objected to secure it through a Russian agency. There is no excuse, therefore, in party exigencies at home for refusing justice. . . . There never was such an opportunity for a statesman, and the opportunity, whether seized or missed, has, at all events, fallen to a man strong enough to use it if he please.—*Spec.* Nov. 11th,

§ 9. *The Second Episode.*

a. Lord Beaconsfield's Guildhall Speech.—The very day after the announcement of Lord Salisbury's appointment had seemed to promise an adjustment of conflicting contentions, an event occurred which threw things into confusion again. This was the speech which Lord Beaconsfield delivered on Lord Mayor's Day at the Guildhall.

After an allusion to his forebodings expressed in that place a year before, which, he said, had proved not altogether without foundation, Lord Beaconsfield proceeded to say that the first of

the two great objects of the Government had been the maintenance of the general peace of Europe, and further to identify this with the maintenance of the legalistic interpretation of the treaties.[1]

> That, then, has been our first object during the last year. [The Berlin Memorandum called on Turkey to perform tasks, impossible in her then condition, on pain of "ulterior proceedings," thus] indirectly but unmistakably announcing the military occupation of the Turkish Provinces. (Loud cheers.) That would have been a violation of the independence and territorial integrity of Turkey; and, therefore, we felt it our duty to reject the proposition. . . . The next occasion on which we had to come to a decision which involved the maintenance of this principle of the integrity and territorial independence of Turkey was when a proposition was made that Austria should occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina—that Russia should occupy the great region of Bulgaria, and at the same time that the united fleets of Europe should proceed to Constantinople. To that proposal we could not assent, because it violated the most solemn treaties to which England was a party, and a year having now elapsed, you will perceive, my Lord, that, trying as have been the emergencies, and searching as have been the circumstances, so far as Great Britain is concerned, the independence and territorial integrity of the Turkish Empire have been maintained, and the general peace has been upheld. (Loud cheers.) So much for the first great purpose which Her Majesty's Government proposed to themselves in the trying circumstances in which they found themselves. There was another great object, not so great as the maintenance of the general peace, but still one which appealed to our sympathy and demanded our most careful attention, to secure such an amelioration of the condition of the subjects of these Provinces, as by their increasing prosperity and welfare, would add in the surest manner to the independence and integrity of the country, and prevent the occasion of future disturbances. In September, there was no special reason whatever why peace should not have been obtained in a very brief time. (Cheers.) Every Power acceded to these propositions [the terms proposed by England], and, I am bound to say, no Power with more readiness and cordiality than Russia. (Cheers.) But what happened? An indignant burst of feeling in this country, excited by horrible events, created such a sensation and excitement that the people of Servia and the friends of the people of Servia really believed the people of England had suddenly determined to [illegible] traditionary policy of the country which the eminent [illegible] Europe only five years ago—including the members of the Government (cheers and a laugh)—thought so [illegible] Servia was induced to retract what she had exacted [illegible] more to engage in a sanguinary struggle which [illegible] humanity must lament. (Cheers.) [The Government] Porte's counter-offer of an armistice for six months [illegible]

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 128.

and satisfactory answer to their proposals for an armistice, and felt bound in honour not to press the Porte to change that decision and therefore declined to take any further steps. However,] after a considerable time an armistice was obtained. (Cheers.) I have heard a good deal about an *ultimatum*. That is an ugly word—(cheers)—when we are endeavouring to bring about a pacific settlement. (Cheers.) But I believe, my Lord, that the *ultimatum* was something in this case like bringing an action for debt when the whole sum claimed had previously been paid into court. (Cheers and a laugh.) However, here is the fact—on which I think I may congratulate the country (cheers)—we have an armistice. An armistice is certainly not peace, any more than courtship is wedlock (cheers and a laugh); but in general it is the auspicious harbinger of a happy future.[1] (Loud cheers.) The armistice being obtained, Her Majesty's Government lost no time in proposing to the Powers to hold a Conference. [Lord Salisbury would represent Her Majesty at the Conference, which all the Powers had agreed to attend], and I have no doubt that he will use and exercise all his abilities to bring about that permanent peace in Europe which all statesmen agree can best be secured by adhering to the treaties which exist (cheers), knowing well—and none knows better than my noble friend—that the independence and territorial integrity of Turkey are not to be secured by mere pen-and-ink work. Unless the great body of the people find that they are under a Government which studies their welfare and is proud of their prosperity, even the independence and integrity of a country must themselves vanish. [In the present temper of Europe there is good hope of accomplishing our objects without those terrible appeals to war, of which we hear too frequently and too much.] Peace is especially an English policy. (Cheers.) She is not an aggressive Power—for there is nothing which she desires. She covets no cities and no provinces. What she wishes is to maintain and to enjoy the unexampled Empire which she has built up, and which it is her pride to remember exists as much upon sympathy as upon force. (Cheers.) But, although the policy of England is peace, there is no country so well prepared for war as our own. (Cheers.) If she enters into conflict in a righteous cause—and I will not believe that England will go to war except for a righteous cause (cheers)—if the contest is one which concerns her liberty, her independence, or her Empire, her resources, I feel, inexhaustible. (Loud cheers.) She is not a country that, when ters into a campaign, has to ask herself whether she can a second or a third campaign. (Cheers.) She enters into a which she will not terminate till right is done. (Loud

Lord Beaconsfield, Nov. 9th.

the *Daily News* (Nov. 18th) the Duke of Argyll elaborately Lord Beaconsfield's speech by comparison with the despatch dates. He arrives at the conclusion that the failure of the ributed to a wrong cause—the agitation—and that the Premier right cause—the Turkish refusal to entertain them.

This speech was regarded as a defiance of Public Opinion, just as the Aylesbury speech had been. But what criticism chiefly dealt with now was Lord Beaconsfield himself, his position with regard to his colleagues, and the strange spectacle which the Cabinet presented, rather than the merits of the policy he formulated. Belief in the conversion of the Cabinet to the "violet" policy was, on the whole, much stronger now than at the time of the Aylesbury speech, for those who fully believed in the will of Lord Beaconsfield to go the whole length of the "red" policy were beginning to look upon him as no longer the ruling spirit in the Cabinet.

> The Prime Minister had something substantial to say last night, but he enveloped it, as he usually does in his visits to the City, in a haze of grandiloquent mystery. . . . [He] explained to his audience that the Government had sedulously pursued two objects in the course of the last twelvemonth—the first, the maintenance of the general peace of Europe; the second and subsidiary aim, the improvement of the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte—but before he had advanced beyond the middle of this explanation it appeared that there was a third object which the Ministry had at one time, if not uniformly, held superior to all others, and that was the preservation of the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire. We feel we are dealing with what may be not improperly described as ancient history when we follow Lord Beaconsfield in considering the policy of the Ministry six months ago, but the inconsistency of his language is too instructive as showing the justice of Lord Hartington's apprehensions that there are members of the Government who continue to harbour a hankering after a policy which the course of events has remitted to the past as much as the maintenance of the map of Europe as settled by the Congress of Verona. . . . . *The point of importance* on which the audience at the Guildhall last night must have desired to be enlightened, and for which the whole of Europe will search the Prime Minister's speech to-day, is to be found in the answer to the question—In what spirit will Lord Salisbury proceed to the execution of his [redacted] mission? . . . We may fairly ask, By which meaning does Beaconsfield propose to stand? Are the treaties which [redacted] be accepted as an unalterable basis of negotiation [redacted] higher principle of popular security under a just [redacted] to be the guide of Lord Salisbury's conduct? The [redacted] leaves the issue open to be interpreted according [redacted] every one. Our faith in the permanent use [redacted] Salisbury's labours rests on the conviction that [redacted] the good government of the disturbed provinces [redacted] policy.—*T.* Nov. 10th.

In reading the speech of Lord Beaconsfield at the Guildhall, we can never lose sight of the personality of the speaker. The Prime Minister impresses the individuality of his character upon everything he says; he does not think quite as ordinary men think; he sees things through some refracting medium which changes the colour and alters the proportions of the objects he sees: and even in the construction of his sentences he surprises us with unexpected conclusions that do not always appear to be strictly related to what went before. All this adds immensely to the interest of his addresses, though it is a necessary consequence of the idiosyncrasy of his habit that friends and enemies are often alike puzzled as to the proper interpretation of his language, and the former are not unfrequently more distressed than the latter by the irregularities of his fancy. Those who have not irrevocably attached themselves to Lord Beaconsfield and his fortunes can afford to be amused when his faithful followers are anxious and serious. They find it an intellectual exercise to track his zigzag movements as he goes flashing about, now here, now there, and never quite where you expected to find him. There is, indeed, one consideration which may disturb our quiet enjoyment in following his flights. It is still uncertain how far foreigners have come to understand the originality of his character. They know that he is not as Englishmen commonly are, and they are drawn to him by this variation from the ordinary type; but very few of them have learnt to appreciate the individual traits of his character, and scarcely one has fathomed the absolutely unique relations established between Lord Beaconsfield and the British public. We are all pleased that he should be among us to relieve our weary seriousness, but it is also true that whenever he speaks we translate what he says out of his dialect into that of common life, and we accept the corrected paraphrase alone as possessing real political significance. We pare down what appears to be too fanciful; we abate pretensions that seem extravagant; sometimes there are portions of his speeches which we drop altogether as the mere garnish of their solid matter; sometimes we supplement what he says by facts we remember which he has overlooked. And we flatter ourselves that we always have it in our power to recall him from any excessive sallies, being well assured that there is a solidity and *vis inertiæ* in the judgment of the nation which may be trusted to keep it steady. There never before was a Prime Minister thus regarded in this or any other country, and we do not conceal from ourselves that at a juncture like the present, the sayings of a public man are canvassed throughout there is a danger that the precise significance of Lord ...d's language may be sometimes misapprehended.—*T.*

...an deny Lord Beaconsfield's heroic courage as a ...But if any one were prepared to deny it before the ...ch of Thursday, that speech would have converted ...doubt it will be s...d, and we are not specially con-

cerned to deny, that in thus speaking we may be taking Lord Beaconsfield too literally,—that he only wanted to gloss over the great collapse of his policy, and to defer for a while the confession to the world that Lord Salisbury is sent to Constantinople to reverse the policy of the treaty which Lord Beaconsfield so much admires, and to take guarantees of a very substantial kind. . . . That may be so, we are strongly disposed to hope that it will be so. But, if so, what a spectacle is this of an English Minister clinging with perverse tenacity to the last rag of a policy which he believes he shall be almost immediately compelled to abandon, and brazening it out to the last, as if he had, to use Lord Derby's language, not a word to regret, not a deed to retract! [We do not doubt it will be Lord Salisbury, and not Lord Beaconsfield, who will determine the policy which England is to pursue, but] of all the political spectacles of this generation the double-faced foreign policy of this Cabinet seems to us the most discreditable and the most strange. Talk of the English people neutralising the influence of the English Government! What can neutralise the influence of the English Government so much as the care with which the Prime Minister himself wipes out the moral effect of every act by which his Foreign Secretary has reluctantly attempted to bring Turkey to a sense of her impotence, and to a conception of her responsibilities to Europe?—*Spec.* Nov. 11th.

Lord Beaconsfield is distinguishing himself this vacation by pursuing a steady policy of trumping his partner's tricks. Unquestionably the finesse for which he has been famous is now devoted to the work of defeating, not the counsels of the Opposition, but the counsels of his own familiar friends. We have never been able to admire Lord Derby's treatment of the Eastern Question. . . . But whatever be thought of Lord Derby's policy, it is at least a policy intended to keep England out of the fray, a policy as free from braggadocio as it is destitute of strength and nerve; while Lord Beaconsfield has steadily endeavoured to neutralise it, by saying just at the critical moment what undid all the impression of laborious half-and-halfness which Lord Derby had taken such vast pains to produce. And yet Sir Stafford Northcote assures us in the blandest manner that the Cabinet are entirely at one. . . . Now we have to press very seriously on Great Britain, as well as on Lord Beaconsfield's colleagues, the question whether this kind of see-saw between the head of the Cabinet and the Foreign Secretary is either decent or tolerable? Is a Minister so to intrigue against his own Cabinet that [illegible] what his colleagues do one day is to be extinguished [illegible] of what he says the next? . . . It works mischief [illegible] No one knows which to trust,—Lord Derby's des[patches] Beaconsfield's speeches. Russia is kept in the [illegible] tation of war. Turkey is kept in the agonies of [illegible] for armed help which she is officially discourag[ed] but unofficially told by still higher authority [illegible] well expect. The English people have not t[hought]

policy of their Government means; and commerce all over the world vibrates to the uncertainty, and passes from panic to panic. It is a novel and discreditable spectacle. If Lord Beaconsfield means what he says, he should ask for Lord Derby's resignation, and so reconstitute his Ministry—if he can—as to make his own speeches represent their policy. If Lord Beaconsfield does not mean what he says, then Lord Derby should insist on obtaining that support from his chief which will, at least, give his colourless policy the pallid consistency he desires, and let all Europe know that we can be counted on for neither party, and have influence with neither.—*Spec.* Nov. 18th.

But though the speech was regretted as likely to mislead opinion abroad, Mr. Lowe was almost alone in protesting that when he rose to expound the policy of the Government, the Prime Minister of England was entitled to be taken at his word by the people of his own country.

I desire respectfully to draw attention to Lord Beaconsfield's speech at the Guildhall. I am not going to take any party view of the case, but to draw your attention to this speech as a subject worthy of your most serious consideration, and involving consequences the magnitude of which can hardly be overrated. Before doing so, let me make a preliminary protest. It seems to be the fashion in the newspapers of the day never to accept what a man says as being what he means. . . . The newspapers now cry out,—"Why say any more upon this subject? People have spoken, and the Government must obey the wishes of the people." But then the Government do not obey the wishes of the people. . . . You may have observed how Lord Beaconsfield's speech was treated. "Oh," said a leading journal, "we all know Lord Beaconsfield. There is a sort of freemasonry between him and the people of England; he may say what he pleases, and they shall believe as little as they please. It is only foreigners that can be deceived by what he says. After all, it is only 'pretty Fanny's way.'" (Laughter). Now, that is very funny and ridiculous, but it is also extremely mischievous. (Cheers). I make most earnest protest against it, because it is equivalent to saying that this just country, the mother of liberty, the mother of Parliaments, the country to whom all the world looks as a model and pattern of good and liberal government, is content to be represented by a man whose words it won't mean when they are most emphatically given, but understands them in a totally different sense from what any one else would understand them. Now, it seems to me that this is a miserable way to play with our destinies in a matter of peace and war. (Cheers). It is unworthy of the great position we enjoy. (Cheers). I maintain it is not true; it is simply the newspaper way of getting out of a difficulty. Nothing can have been more unfortunate than the conduct of the Government in this matter.

They have expressed themselves quite opposed to the popular movement on this subject; they have denounced it in every way, and have denounced those who supported it. Lord Beaconsfield has gone on holding steadily to the doctrine of the independence of the Turkish Empire. He reiterates it now. Why disbelieve him? Why put that insult upon him? Why maintain, though he is a Tory leader (laughter), that every word he says is false; that he uses words contrary to what he means? Gentlemen, I will not put that insult upon him. I refuse to believe that his words do not convey his meaning. . . . We have had the opinions of Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues deliberately expressed on the one hand, and on the other hand we have had the opinions of the English people; and now, simply because Parliament is not sitting, the Government is to do what it pleases, contrary to the expressed opinion of thousands and tens of thousands of the people of this country.—*Mr. Lowe at the Colston Dinner at Bristol, T.* Nov. 14th.

In a remarkable article which followed Mr. Lowe's speech, the *Times* claimed to have interpreted Lord Beaconsfield to his foreign critics, and thus to have obviated the misunderstandings which might otherwise have followed.

[There is a little ambiguity in Mr. Lowe's denunciation.] Is it the fact that is mischievous, or our recognition of the fact? We are as persuaded as any one can be that it is, to say the least, most unfortunate at this juncture of affairs that the character of Lord Beaconsfield's language should be liable to continual misinterpretation abroad. Two years since, when he contrasted, at the Guildhall, the position of an English peasant with that of a foreign nobleman, it was of the smallest possible importance that foreign critics should jump at the conclusion that he was reflecting on the treatment of Count Arnim. We knew what his meaning was, and the harmless error was promptly corrected by his authority. His loose and random utterances of Thursday last cannot be thus left to the chances of international misconstruction, and it became our duty to explain at once the peculiar, and, indeed, the unique, relations existing between the Prime Minister and the Eng[redacted] people. It is a simple fact that there is a freemasonry b[redacted] us; that we always remember the strange refraction o[redacted] sonality, which alters the colours and modifies the [redacted] everything he sees, and that we habitually transl[redacted] flowing phrases into the dialect of common life. Ca[redacted] doubt of the wisdom of letting this be known thro[redacted] at the present moment? A review of the effect L[redacted] speech has excited in every capital at once sup[redacted] Thanks to the comments that have been made[redacted] meaning is beginning to be understood, afte[redacted] interval.—*T.* Nov. 15th.

Mr. Lowe argues as though the object of the Liberal Opposition were to hold the Prime Minister to his brief. It seems to us that the object of the Liberal Opposition should rather be to give him every opportunity of departing from his brief. One of the simplest ways of attaining this object is to lose no opportunity of pointing out the discrepancies that exist between Lord Beaconsfield's language taken in its natural sense, and Lord Beaconsfield's language when interpreted by the action of the Cabinet of which he is the head.[1] After all, the really important thing to know is what the Cabinet are going to do, and if there is reason to suppose from other evidence that the Cabinet are not prepared to maintain the independence of Turkey in the sense which Lord Beaconsfield appears to attach to it, there is also reason to suppose that Lord Beaconsfield's words will turn out to have another meaning than the obvious one. If this other meaning is not only different from the obvious one, but inconsistent with it, it must be left to Lord Beaconsfield's admirers to explain the discrepancy. It is enough for us to note it, and to be thankful for it.—*Spec.* Nov. 18th.

b. The Czar's Moscow Speech.—The Lord Mayor's Day fell on a Thursday, and on the following Monday (Nov. 13th) the English newspapers brought the news that on the Friday the Czar had addressed the nobles and Communal Council of Moscow, who received his words with enthusiasm. The Czar spoke of the sympathy of all Russia for the sufferings of their brethren and co-religionists, of his own desire to spare Russian blood, and to obtain a real improvement of the position of the Christians in the East by peaceful means; but of his resolve to act independently if he could not obtain the necessary guarantees. As if to give point to the Czar's words, simultaneously with them came the news that orders had been given for the mobilisation of six corps of the Russian army.

c. Phenomena of the First Episode repeat themselves.—The days which followed Lord Salisbury's appointment and the delivery of [illegible] Guildhall and the Moscow speeches present a curious parallelism [illegible] "First Episode." Lord Salisbury's appointment is an event [illegible] the "Second Episode" which answers to the publication [illegible]glish Terms" before the first.

[illegible]he Aylesbury speech had puzzled every one as to [illegible]rnment really meant, and had given currency to the [illegible]gitation was mischievous and an obstacle to a satis[illegible]t, so now once more the Guildhall speech throws

[illegible]osition tactics at the opening of the ensuing session, *post*,

doubt on the significance of Lord Salisbury's appointment, though the belief in the conversion of the Government as a whole was less seriously shaken now than in September, owing to the impression that Lord Beaconsfield had been overruled. Again, too, the key-notes of the speech, "The independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire," and the warlike defiance with which it concluded, are eagerly caught up by Lord Beaconsfield's followers. Treaty legalism comes to the front once more, and with it the confident assumption that England would go to war to maintain the doctrine.

Then came the Moscow speech and the Russian mobilisation, answering exactly to the Russian proposals for occupation in September. Simultaneously with the news of the Moscow speech came the rumour that the Porte hesitated to accept the Conference just as they had refused to accept the armistice and the "English Terms" in September. The outbreak of war was again thought to be imminent.

Like causes produced like effects, and as in October so in November the near prospect of Russian armies entering the field brought on a fit of "erubescence."

The second episode was brought to an end by an explanation that something had been kept back which threw a different light on the intentions of Russia; and upon this, just as upon the discovery of the misconception about the Russian proposals in October, follows once more a great and, as it was thought, a final discrediting of anti-Russism and of the "red" element represented by Lord Beaconsfield in the Cabinet.

Meanwhile the supposed imminence of a Russian declaration of war again brought out the symptoms of "erubescence." There was perhaps less readiness than a month before to be frightened out of the intellectual conviction that the Emancipation policy was right and safe; but if the war between Russia and Turkey should once break out, many, it seems, were disposed to regard the opportunity for a happy solution as over, while they thought temptations would be placed in the way of Russia which she might not be able to withstand.

> Lord Beaconsfield's wild and random talk in the City has produced its natural effects. He has been understood to throw down the gauntlet to Russia, and the Emperor Alexander in person has taken it up. The Moscow speech is evidently a reply to that made in the Guildhall the day before. The telegrams which we

publish this morning from our correspondents at Vienna, Berlin, Rome, Paris, and Buda-Pesth reflect the general uneasiness which this challenge and reply have occasioned.—*D. N.* Nov. 13th.[1]

Once more darkness has fallen over the prospect of peace. That it will lift again we may hope; but the news that comes both from St. Petersburg and Constantinople this morning gives us warning that what is called "feeling" may yet conquer wisdom, and that a certain degree of insanity already threatens to creep into the judgments of those upon whom depends the tremendous issue of peace or war. . . . If the temper too plainly indicated in this haughty message is really dominant at Constantinople, the prospect is a gloomy one indeed. And, supposing the Porte to be actually in this mood, it will only be a fresh illustration of the importance of that factor in the present problem which in some quarters is so systematically ignored. Those who are in the habit of settling the Eastern Question without reference to Turkey—of protesting that nothing is required but agreement among the other Powers—may learn from this how idle such an assumption is and how dangerous it may become.—*P. M. G.* Nov. 13th.[2]

[It is common ground among the Powers that the Governments of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria must be reformed; the difficulty lies in the definition of the reforms and in the allowance of the guarantees. As to Bosnia, Lord Derby proposed that a system of local institutions should be established.] "There was no question of the creation of a tributary State." Why were these words added? Primarily to satisfy the susceptibilities of Austria, and in the second place because, as Lord Derby said, he would never be guilty of the quackery of putting his name to a scheme that would not work. . . . It must be added that we have received a new light on the force of Austro-Hungarian susceptibilities since Lord Derby's despatch was written. The acquiescence of the Imperial Royal Government in the Russian *ultimatum*, followed by the discussion in the Reichsrath, shows that the lesson has been learnt at Pesth and Vienna that it is wise to break the force of necessary changes by anticipating them. If, seeing our way to the establishment of a tributary State, we supported that solution of the difficulty, Austria would follow us, and the problem would be accomplished. . . . A mere grant of institutions by the Porte, to be established and maintained under the control of a

[1] The *Times*, however, (Nov. 13th) thinks the opinion, that the Czar intended to reply to Lord Beaconsfield, at least hasty; and suggests that the Moscow speech should rather be connected with the despatch of Oct. 30th. The *Times* (Nov. 18th) reports that the *Nord* denies that the Czar's Moscow speech was a reply to the Guildhall speech. It would be below the dignity of the Czar to engage in a duel of threatening words with the Minister of another Power. Subsequently Lord Loftus wrote that he was assured from a reliable source that the Czar had no cognizance of the Earl of Beaconsfield's speech when he addressed the deputations at Moscow.—*Turkey*, ii. 1877, No. 40.

[2] Compare art. entitled "What the Turk Can Do," *P. M. G. ante*, vol. i. p. 259. It would seem that the *Pall Mall Gazette* was actuated by an almost mediæval fear of the Turk, rather than by philo-Turkism.

Pasha of the Provinces, would be obviously futile. If we could approve it, we should be guilty of the counter quackery of deceiving ourselves with what we know to be illusory. The one thing clear in the East is that the Porte cannot defend the liberties the Sultan may affect to grant. [The minimum limitation of arbitrary power] can be accomplished only by the occupation of the Province by a police that can be depended upon, acting under the command of a superintendent charged with the duty of establishing and setting in action an independent system of local administration. . . . The police force should be above the suspicion of self-interest, and we pointed out on another occasion that a French contingent would satisfy this condition, while the precedent of the French occupation of Syria supports the suggestion. . . . The settlement of Herzegovina involves no element of difficulty to distinguish it from that of Bosnia, but every one knows that Bulgaria presents a much more complicated problem to be solved. . . . If we approach the question in a working spirit, with a real desire to abate the evils that are always precipitating disorder and raising threats of war, we shall find the difficulties of our task diminish before us. But to attain this we must have the minds as well as the courage of men. We must deal frankly and sincerely with those from whom we desire frankness and sincerity; and we must rise above the temptations to see nothing but greed and deceit in the Princes and people of other lands.—*T.* Nov. 13th.

The *Daily News*, speaking of the mobilisation, says it is impossible to conceal the fact that another step has been taken along the road which leads to war. It is no use to disguise the imminent danger of the situation. The English Government has helped any warlike design entertained by Russia by its niggardly and hesitating co-operation in peaceful measures.—(Nov. 15th.)

We ought to consider that nothing has been changed by the Czar's speech, or Prince Gortschakoff's Circular, or the decree of mobilisation, or the jubilations of the Russian cities. . . . That this phase in the controversy would be reached sooner or later we have never doubted. Every failure of diplomacy made it more inevitable. . . . The principles of pacification, though they must now be applied under increasing difficulties, are precisely the same as it was necessary to apply six months or twelve months ago. [At the same time the Russian military preparations] will assuredly not induce the Queen's Government or its representative to abandon anything which they may judge necessary for our honour or safety or for the maintenance of the European system. The integrity of the Ottoman Empire, in the sense only that no foreign ruler shall acquire any of its provinces, must be the starting-point of all negotiation.—*T.* Nov. 15th.

[The *Times* refers to the firm belief of the Turks that England's interests are so much bound up with their own fate that we must necessarily fight for them.] Against this false belief we do most solemnly protest. . . . The obvious lesson of the occasion is

that we should exhaust every effort to make the Conference succeed. If it fails, we must be prepared for a year—perhaps for two or three years, of uninterrupted anxiety. . . . Is there any moral doubt that in that case Russia would take the field? Our hope has been in the pacific desires of the Czar, but the Czar has been carried onwards by forces which even his autocratic power acknowledges, and his language and his acts leave no room for misunderstanding his purposes.—*T.* Nov. 15th.[1]

This is no time, however, for idle lamentations. It is evident that something must be done speedily if war between Russia and Turkey is to be averted. . . . The English Government has undertaken to propose in a European Conference that guarantees for the good government of the disturbed provinces of Turkey shall be demanded of the Porte; but at the same time, by its most responsible organs, it is doing its best to attenuate their significance. . . . Now is the time for the English Government to put forth all its authority at Constantinople, and insist on such conditions as shall be satisfactory to the representatives of assembled Europe, . . . and in taking this course it will most effectually thwart any selfish designs which that of Russia may conceal behind its philanthropic professions.—*D. N.* Nov. 16th.

It is impossible sometimes to make out whether the calls to arms which appear each morning in some of our contemporaries are meant to take effect if the Porte remains immovable, or if Russia occupies Bulgaria in sheer inability to obtain protection for the Christian inhabitants in any other way, or if Russia throws off the mask and, in spite of the Porte's submission, moves her troops in the direction of Constantinople. Each of these courses might require a wholly different treatment, and the existing divergence of opinion might perhaps be greatly lessened if the physicians would state more precisely to which of these aspects of the question their prescriptions are meant to apply.—*D. N.* Nov. 18th.

The discouragement, amounting almost to despair, of a successful issue from any future negotiation arises from the feeling that the forces which have been gathering during the last few months are too powerful to be any longer controlled, and that no science can ever draw the electricity from these heavily charged clouds. Both Russia and Turkey, it is thought, are in that state when war is the only relief for pent-up animosities. Furthermore, the Russians believe that their long watched-for opportunity has now come; while the Turks, on their side, are convinced that they are never likely to have a better chance of inflicting a defeat on their enemies.—*T.* Nov. 18th.

While the supporters of the "violet" policy were thus somewhat relaxing their efforts in view of the imminence of single-handed action on the part of Russia, treaty legalism and an active

[1] In two leading articles on this day.

"red" policy were once more pushed to the front by the supporters of the Government.

The *Post* observes that the Government has taken its stand upon the treaty-guaranteed independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and on preserving the interests of the British Empire; and if these be menaced, the military force of England will be developed as far as may be required to protect them. It is to be hoped that there may be no mistake upon this point in any quarter—such a mistake as that which was made just before, and which led to, the Crimean war.—(Nov. 13th.)

The *Standard* says the Czar's speech is not calculated to remove the misgivings which Russian action has inspired. The allusion to the interests of the Christians, as if they were Russia's special care, will confirm in their faith those who believed the disturbance in Turkey was got up by Russia as an excuse for freeing herself from the obligations of the Treaty of Paris. What are those guarantees on which the Czar lays so much stress, and have they any relation to the project which was submitted by Count Schouvaloff to the British Government on the 25th of September? Until these and other doubts are cleared up there seems to be only too much justification for what has been taken to be the menacing tone of Lord Beaconsfield's speech at the Guildhall banquet.—(Nov. 13th.)

The *Standard* alludes to an article in the Russian *Golos*, as distinctly anticipating that should the English Government refuse to make that change of policy demanded by (what the *Standard* calls) the Russian interest, there would be another great explosion of Public Opinion. We know, says the *Standard*, how absurd this is; but it is to be feared that, deluded by speeches like Mr. Lowe's, and by Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet, Russia will repeat her mistake of 1854.—(Nov. 15th.)

The *Daily Telegraph* says it would be neither useful nor possible to disguise the minatory character of the mobilisation of the Russian army, coming as it does so soon after the Moscow speech, and in the midst of the preparations for the Conference. It draws an elaborate parallel between passing events and those of 1853-4.—(Nov. 15th.)

Meanwhile, alarmist rumours of the intentions or war preparations of the Government again sprang up in a manner which showed that the war-clouds which had appeared so suddenly a month before[1] had not really been dispelled, as, for the moment, had seemed to be the case.[2]

[1] *Ante*, p. 79.

[2] In particular there appears to have been a rumour of an intended occupation of Constantinople by a British *corps d'armée*.

The purpose of the Government, it was said, was not to engage in the impending war between Russia and Turkey.

England would seize and hold Constantinople temporarily on behalf of the other

d. Rise of a Bellicose Party in England.—We note too now the rise of an active war party. People were becoming familiarised with the notion of war with Russia, and were beginning to respond to the stimulus not without some degree of pleasurable excitement:

> Mr. Bright's speech against war was specially, of course, directed against a reckless Party which is trying to drive this country into the contest in Turkey.—*T.* Nov. 24th.[1]
>
> The routine of life is so dull that we are ready to welcome excitement without considering the cost. A declaration of war is often popular in a free community. Within twelve months or less—if the war lasts so long—there arises a feeling of astonishment that our arms have not overcome every enemy, and discontent supervenes on enthusiasm. The younger men among us remember Ashantee and Abyssinia; they did not share the dissatisfaction that was experienced when our troops spent a second winter in the Crimea; they have read of the glorious victories of the Great War, but they know nothing of the sacrifices which were in themselves equally glorious. Let us, then, be sober in realising where we are and what it is that may lie before us. With sufficient justification, it would become us to fight even to extinction; without this justification victory itself would be dishonourable.—*T.* Nov. 25th.

The idea begins to find some expression and to gain currency that the Premier himself was not over-anxious to avoid war with Russia; nay, that for some hidden reason he was bent on "war for its own sake."

> The Mohammedan Press sounds the war-note, and is jubilant over a supposed repression of the anti-war, the pro-Christian, the Liberal feeling of this kingdom. . . . The Prime Minister has made peace almost hopeless, and unless a powerful body of the British people promptly repudiate his wicked policy, he will gain the last object of his ambition. The great political necromancer has wrought successive and injurious wonders. . . . There was nothing left unaccomplished by his malignant ambition except to be the author of a great war; and in this he bids fair to succeed.—*Mr. Edward Jenkins* in *D. N.* Nov. 18th.
>
> "It is not," said a German of considerable position to me, "on account of Turkey, but for general political reasons that England has made up her mind to fight;" and his remark

Powers and the world at large, and would willingly withdraw when a European arrangement should be come to as to the wardenship of the Dardanelles.—The *Financier* of Nov. 17th, quoted in *T.* Nov. 18th.

[1] The reference is to Mr. Bright's speech at Llandudno (reported in *T.* Nov. 23rd). Compare his reference to "The Rowdy War Party," in a speech at Bradford, July 25th, 1877, *post*, chap. xvi. § 5.

expresses an opinion which is, I regret to say, very widely held, even among the cooler heads, in this capital. In other words, the common opinion here, among others than Turks, is that though war with Russia is quite unnecessary, Lord Beaconsfield, for reasons not generally known, has made up his mind that there shall be war.—*Constantinople Correspondent, D. N.* Dec. 9th.

At the same time signs appear of an alliance between Lord Beaconsfield and "Society," connected with the rise of that vague political bias which we have spoken of as "Disraeli-Toryism."

In his good-humoured and sensible speech at Montrose, Mr. Baxter remarked the curious fact that "Society" is always on the wrong side. . . . The publican in one of Mr. Dickens's novels was proud of always voting for the "gentlemanly interest," and belonging to the "gentlemanly party;" and he is a very good type of certain writers and speakers who make the same pretension with just as much reason. . . . The "cynic" of the clubs, that typical character who is taking the place of the "scoffer" familiar in pulpit oratory, is too much accustomed to hard words to mind them very much. His views are quite simple and intelligible, and, if it be difficult to agree with his conclusions, that is because his premises are not, strictly speaking, adequate. His elder brother served in the Crimea, and said, begad, that the Turks are very decent fellows. . . . As for the other side, he is sure that these oppressed nationalities are always humbugs. . . . Besides, the fellows are not fit to govern themselves, and would, if they had succeeded, have behaved just as badly as the Bashi-Bazouks, whose conduct, after all, has been grossly exaggerated. There is a good deal of opinion formed in this intelligent way, out of pure laziness. —*D. N.* Nov. 18th.[1]

From these sources there was at this time some accession of strength to the extreme "red" party, which was zealous for the

[1] Compare the following, which I think refers to a somewhat later date, when the bellicose spirit had filtered downwards:—

"I often think of a remark I once heard made by a working-man at a club; it rises to my mind whenever I want a measure of the competence of the great mass of working-men to judge of large national questions. It was at an early stage of the great Eastern controversy, and he settled the question of our relations with Russia in this way. 'I do not know how you feel,' he said, turning to the audience of working-men, 'and I do not know how it is, but whenever I hear the Russians mentioned I feel the blood tingling all over me.' He spoke as if he thought this instinctive feeling might be fairly taken as an intimation of the proper steps to be taken, and when I expressed alarm and horror at such a mode of handling the question, I thought I could observe that many among the audience were surprised at the impression it had made on me. But I carried away a conception I never had before of the utter childishness with respect to great public matters not immediately affecting themselves in which vast multitudes of people live."—Professor Seeley, "Political Somnambulism," *Macmil.* Nov. 1883.

Professor Seeley appears to refer to an incident which occurred in a discussion after a lecture which he delivered on "The Anti-Napoleonic Revolution," I think towards the close of 1877, at one of the workmen's clubs in the South of London, at the request of an association called "The Social and Political Education League."

defence and support of Turkey. The attitude of this section towards the Government was remarkable. Their hope, until the Berlin Treaty disappointed them, was in Lord Beaconsfield. If it had not been for the Guildhall speech they might have felt a serious gulf to exist between the Government and themselves. That speech at once rallied them and enlisted them on the Government side.

Thus the tripartite character of the Ministry, so far from being a source of weakness, was actually a source of strength. The "red" section rallied to Lord Beaconsfield, while "violet" opinion was conciliated by a belief in Lord Salisbury. Lord Derby's policy of mere "order," to be sure, was under a cloud for the moment but still he had not lost the reputation for safety and caution which weighed heavily with many minds.

e. Formation of the Eastern Question Association.—The reappearance in many quarters of the confident assumption that England would go to war with Russia, if Russia should use force to extort the desired concessions from Turkey, and the consequent blazing up of a war spirit which marked the two episodes—especially the second—made it manifest that there was still need not only to advocate the "violet," but also to protest against the "red" policy.

Thus there came about a renewed outburst, which may indeed be regarded as the final effort of one long agitation, that commenced with the crystallisation of Public Opinion and did not cease till there was good reason for believing that its object had been substantially attained. But there are important differences to notice between the manifestations of August and September, and those of late November and early December. The assumption that there was but one mind or one purpose in the Cabinet was now almost entirely given up. It was impossible to affect even a decent show of belief in it. There was, as it seemed, a strong influence steadily resisting the impulse which had been given to the Cabinet towards a "violet" policy and persistently dragging them back to the "red." And in this influence men recognised Lord Beaconsfield. It was no longer expected, as at first, that the Government would be eager to catch and swift to follow the prevailing drift of Public Opinion. The conversion of the Cabinet no longer meant a mere opening of their eyes to the folly of the one and the merits of the other policy, and to the fact that the nation's eyes had been opened too. It could no longer be doubted that Lord Beacons-

field's predilection for the "red" policy was invincible. There was no longer any question of converting him. The conversion of the Cabinet now meant that his influence should cease to be felt in it. Thus the opponents of the "red" policy out of doors now appealed to Public Opinion, not merely to let itself be heard, but to organise itself, as if for a long and arduous struggle.

It will be remembered that at the close of the session a Parliamentary Committee was constituted in order to watch the progress of events in the East.[1] This Committee now endeavoured by an appeal, privately circulated, to ascertain the feelings of the country, and the response from all parts was so warm and so general that on November 17th it was determined to hold a general meeting in London, to be called a National Conference—

> to consider the best means of promoting the favourable progress of the Eastern Question through the concert of the Powers and nations of Europe, and particularly—(1) of obtaining for the Christian provinces of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, a release from the direct rule of the Porte, with due guarantees for the equal rights of the non-Christian population; (2) and also of diffusing through the country sound information on the various branches of the question.—*T.* and *D. N.* Nov. 18th.

It so happened that the meeting at St. James's Hall was not actually held until the cloud which the Guildhall speech had thrown over the fair prospect of a reconciliation had, as it seemed, passed away.[2] But the effort was not allowed this time to dissipate itself with the mere bringing together of a great gathering. The holders of the meeting did not separate when they left St. James's Hall; on the contrary, they constituted themselves into a *quasi*-corporate body, under the name of "The Eastern Question Association,"[3] with the objects at once to instruct and inform Public Opinion, and to bring the "violet" opinions to bear upon the Government by focusing and giving them adequate expression.

During the remainder of this crisis in the history of the Eastern Question, this Association published various pamphlets, and as occasion demanded, gave the signal from time to time for concerted action, or the simultaneous renewal of agitation in the

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 400.

[2] See *post*, chap. xiv. § 2.

[3] The Duke of Westminster was the president, and the Earl of Shaftesbury, vice-president. The other officers were:—Treasurer, Mr. William Morris; hon. secs. Messrs. George Howard, F. W. Chesson, J. W. Probyn; secretary, Mr. S. Pryce. Messrs. Cassell, Petter, and Galpin published a number of pamphlets for the Association, and besides these, numerous leaflets are published with the address, "Eastern Question Association, 28, Canada Building, King Street, Westminster, S.W."

various localities. In this sense the later agitations which we shall have to notice were not so entirely spontaneous as the first had been, but it would be a mistake to regard them as forced or artificial.

The formation of the Eastern Question Association marks the moment when Public Opinion was roused by the conviction that the organs provided by the Constitution were not affording it control over the National policy, to cast about constructing a new organisation for the purpose of recovering its lost sovereignty.

§ 10. *Close of the Reconciliation Period.*

a. The Czar appeals from the English Government to English Public Opinion.—Almost simultaneously with the news that Turkey accepted the proposal for a Conference, which reached Lord Derby on the night of the 18th,[1] and transpired in the English newspapers a day or two after, an event occurred for which it would be difficult to find a parallel, and which may be regarded as bringing the second episode to an end. This event was nothing less than an appeal by Russia from the English Cabinet to English Public Opinion. The Russian ambassador called on Lord Derby to request that the conversation between the Czar and Lord Loftus should be made public, as it contained assurances which were of a nature to tranquillise public feeling.

Accordingly the despatch of November 2nd, with others, was published in the *London Gazette* of November 21st, and appeared in the morning papers of the 23rd. The manner in which these assurances were received showed the deep impression left on the English mind by the annexation of Khiva.

That recollection did much to prevent implicit reliance being placed upon the security of the personal assurance, or on the expression of the personal intentions, of the Czar; but, nevertheless, the reasonableness of the Czar's position, his earnest desire to work with England for the object both professed, and the good policy of joining with Russia to remove a cause of just complaint were recognised, and the publication of the account of his conversation with Lord Loftus produced a marked effect.

> As for the Czar's pledges—it is true, as his Majesty said, that this is not their first presentation to grievously suspicious England. On another occasion his Majesty gave "the most solemn assurances that he desired no conquest, that he aimed at no aggrandisement,

[1] See *Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 1013.
[2] *Ibid.* No. 1035. As to the conversation referred to see *ante*, p. 87.

and that he had not the smallest wish or intention to be possessed of"—Khiva.—*P. M. G.* Nov. 22nd.

The *Standard* remembers Khiva and doubts the power of the absolute monarch to keep his word. It says with profound regret that the assurances of the Czar will intensify the distrust which the country entertains of his policy.—(Nov. 22nd.) [1]

The *Post* thinks the real key to the Emperor's wish for the publication of his conversation is the emission of the new Russian loan.—(Nov. 23rd.)

The *Daily News* would not recommend that any great interests of this country should be left to depend upon the plighted word, or good intentions, of foreign sovereigns, but thinks there are independent reasons for believing the declaration of the Czar, which is therefore welcome.—(Nov. 22nd.)

Though the Czar's appeal to the confidence of this country is one which cannot be admitted so unconditionally as he imagines, neither can it be lightly set aside. It is one of which history will surely take note.—(Nov. 23rd.)

No one questions the sincerity of the Czar, but many hesitate to put confidence in his promises. This distinction can be easily explained. The Czar is one force, the principal it may be, but still only one force among the many which work together to sway the policy of Russia, and we know that he is at times overborne by influences he attempts to stem in vain. . . . Moreover, there is the fatal precedent of Khiva. . . . What is our policy? Shall we enter into a frank understanding with him, meet him openly as he meets us, and thus afford him the moral support of our agreement to help him hold his own against the forces he has to face; or shall we deprive him of our stay and drive him over into the arms of the multitude that are ready for war? This is a question we would press home to every man among us. Do not let us display that painful incapacity to put ourselves in another man's place which is the explanation of personal as well as national quarrels.—*T.* Nov. 23rd.

If we desire to be credited with sincerity in inviting the guaranteeing Powers and the Porte to join in a Conference, how can we deny the same credit to the Czar, who anticipated us in pressing for the Conference, and to whom the first urgency was due? We have not here to deal with professions, but with acts. The Czar and ourselves are in the same position. If we hope to be believed, we must believe him; if we avow an utter distrust of his honesty, we must begin by admitting that we ourselves are under the same suspicion.—*T.* Nov. 24th.

[1] *St.* and *D. T.* of Nov. 23rd, write in a very similar strain. The anti-Russian newspapers about this time (*e.g. St.* Dec. 1st), while insisting on the worthlessness of the Russian pledge, not very consistently harp upon the assertion that Russia refuses by word or sign to indicate her acceptance of the item, that each Power shall engage not to pursue its individual advantage. Besides being inconsistent, this is not altogether comprehensible, as this item was one of the bases of the Conference, as proposed by England and accepted by the other Powers.

Assurances could scarcely be clearer, and if they had been given by the Emperor of Germany, or Marshal MacMahon, or the Emperor of Austria, they would have been accepted as final, and made the basis of British policy. We are well aware that after the Khiva incident a similar confidence will not in this country be extended to the Czar, who, it will be alleged, may again be unable to control his Generals. . . . What has good faith to do with the matter in hand? The guarantee offered is stronger than any man's word. . . . They are not only not asking for Constantinople just now, but they actually put it definitively out of their own power to take it by placing it under the security of English cannon. [That is by the proposal that the maritime Powers should occupy the Bosphorus.] But it will be said, if the Russian Government does not want Constantinople, what does it want? Why should it not want precisely what the Czar says he wants,—to rescue the Slavic Christians from the Turks? . . . It may be said that the desire we attribute to Russia could be secured at once by accepting Lord Derby's terms, but that argument rests on a wilful blindness to the most patent facts. Lord Derby's terms are mere absurdities, illusions intended to throw dust in the eyes of English friends of the Christian population of Turkey. . . . It is an absurdity, in which it is difficult not to recognise a lingering desire to leave the Turks as complete control over their detested subjects as is consistent with a nominal and temporary peace. The Czar cannot accept such terms with either honour or safety. He must have guarantees, whatever the consequences, and he tries once more to avert the worst of those consequences by the most solemn pledges, supported by the most unquestionable proofs. He may fail, nevertheless, and Russia may rue for generations the weakness which did not compel conquering Generals to recede from Khiva, rather than violate even in appearance a promise to the British Crown.—*Spec.* Nov. 25*th.*

LEO.— Honour bright?
URSA (*with dignity*).— I swear
Upon my faith as gentleman and bear.
LEO.—Then, as we both seem travelling the same way,
Why not together?
URSA (*cocking his ear doubtfully*).—Was not that the bray
Of an alarum!
LEO (*reassuringly*).—Oh! that's only Ben.
He loves to blow his trumpet now and then.
Not always *à propos*. He must be busy.
But tho' the world whirl England is not Dizzy!
Fireworks his whole life long he has been weak on
But don't think every flare he fires a beacon.
You walk this road with me and all goes right,
Nor till you take the other need we fight.
—*Punch*, Dec. 2nd.

The impression that the Czar's assurances once more opened the way for England and Russia to march together for the attainment of a common object, gained ground. There arose, too, a feeling of the gravest astonishment that it should have been possible for such a speech as that of Lord Beaconsfield to have been made while the Cabinet were all the while in possession of the Livadia conversation. The *Times* on two succeeding days assumed its loftiest tone of grave rebuke.

> The Czar's protestations were before the Government when Lord Beaconsfield made his speech at the Guildhall. We must confess that we are amazed by this revelation. . . . Let any one imagine the effect on the mind of the Czar of the Guildhall speech. He had invited our ambassador to an audience; he had communicated to him his views with a humility little calculated to gratify Russian pride; and the apparent answer to it was Lord Beaconsfield's war-note of defiance. Never was utterance more unfortunate. It cannot matter whether we are Liberals or Conservatives; we are Englishmen and we are men, and we must feel something like patriotic remorse if by any accident we are put in a false position before the world. The frame of mind of the Czar on receiving an abstract of the Guildhall oration, which he could not but well construe as a reply to his confidences to our ambassador, may be easily understood, and his Moscow speech is at once explained.—*T.* Nov. 23rd.

> This was the state of affairs when the Lord Mayor entertained his guests a fortnight ago, and if it had been truly known how different would have been our hopes and fears in the interval! . . . It must be regretted that, after the receipt of the substance of the despatch of the 2nd of November, if not of the despatch itself, and after proposals had been made on the suggestion of the Czar for a Conference on the English bases, and had been accepted, language should have been used calculated to undo what had been done, and to render impotent the efforts for peace about to be set in motion. Nor can we help regretting that when the despatch of Lord Derby to Lord Augustus Loftus of the 30th of October was published in the *Gazette*, there were not published simultaneously with it the despatches from Yalta which had at that time been received. These incidents are liable to create difficulties when all of us desire to remove them. If they gave offence at St. Petersburg, as we are told they did, can we say that the feeling excited was wholly inexcusable? It is surely not too much to say that in the management of international intercourse we should be at least as careful not to wound the susceptibilities of others as we would desire others not to wound ours. Even in the last of the despatches published on Tuesday there is an unlucky expression capable of being read in two ways, which must have crept into it by accident. . . . What does this addition mean? One interpre-

tation is that Lord Derby thinks the publication of the Czar's professions opportune because later events have shown how unworthy of trust they are, and the sowers of discord have eagerly seized upon this meaning. Another interpretation is that Lord Derby thinks the publication opportune because it will reduce to their real significance recent acts the purport of which has been misconceived. No Foreign Secretary, least of all Lord Derby, would needlessly utter an offensive sneer; and the second interpretation of course represents Lord Derby's true meaning, but he will be the first to allow how unfortunate it is that language should be used at such a time capable of being read in such opposite senses. Such trifles may affect the welfare of the world when the balance of the future is doubtfully trembling; although our hope is that in the present case the plenipotentiaries entering into Conference at Constantinople will leave the memories of past errors and misconceptions at the door.—*T.* Nov. 24th.

Why that speech? Why have those declarations been kept back till this day? These are the questions asked on every side. The purpose with which the Czar's declarations have been kept back is obvious enough. The Government want to keep up the anti-Russian feeling.—"*Valeat Quantum*," Letter in *T.* Nov. 23rd.

A more nefarious deed was never done by any statesman than when Lord Beaconsfield delivered his Guildhall speech. To call it an act of infamy was not too strong. He had some faith in Lord Salisbury, who had no more respect for the Premier than he (the speaker) had.—*Mr. Courtney.*[1]

It was noticed, too, that the despatches were published in the *Gazette* out of chronological order, and in such a collocation as to suggest to the unwary, that the English Government spontaneously took the initiative in making renewed proposals at Constantinople; whereas in fact their action was prompted by urgent representations from Russia.

The form in which the despatches are published does not at once help this effort of the mind to reproduce the past. They are not arranged in logical nor in chronological order. The first in the *Gazette* is dated the 4th of this month, and is addressed to Sir Henry Elliot; but subsequently we come upon others, dated on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd respectively, and we discover, not without surprise, that the despatch to our ambassador at Constantinople was, in fact, a consequence of the despatches which are postponed to it in order of publication. It is necessary to recast the arrangement of these documents if we would know their full significance. On the 1st of this month our ambassador at St. Petersburg, Lord Augustus Loftus, had arrived at Yalta, and an audience with the Emperor had been appointed for the next day.[2] The Russian

[1] At a meeting in support of his candidature for Liskeard.—*D. N.* Dec. 7th.
[2] *Ante*, p. 87.

ultimatum had been delivered, but no answer had yet been given by the Porte. . . . This was the state of affairs when, on the next day (the 2nd), Lord Augustus Loftus was admitted to an audience, and the Czar made those earnest and repeated protestations, which have everywhere commanded belief. . . . The Czar reminded Lord Augustus Loftus, with perfect truth, that he had assented to every proposal that had been made for a settlement, however far short of what he thought the case required, and he added that he remained most anxious not to separate himself from the European concert. There was another opportunity ready. It seemed most probable that the armistice demanded by his *ultimatum* would be conceded, and a Conference ought to meet at once taking the English proposals as their basis. . . . If the Czar did not want peace, why was he so eager to make this suggestion? He will not let an hour pass; before the armistice had been definitively accepted he urges upon our ambassador the necessity of summoning a Conference to establish peace upon the English basis. We know that the subject of the despatch containing all this was telegraphed at once to Lord Derby, and the next day the Foreign Secretary acknowledged receipt of our ambassador's telegram. That was the 3rd of this month. The next day, the 4th, there was a Cabinet Council, and the same evening that despatch was sent to Sir Henry Elliot which, out of chronological order, is printed at the head of the despatches in Tuesday's *Gazette*, announcing that "Her Majesty's Government have determined to renew the suggestion made by them on the 5th ult., and to take the initiative in proposing that a Conference should be held forthwith at Constantinople."—*T.* Nov. 24th.

At the same time accounts from Constantinople pointed to the conclusion that Sir Henry Elliot, to say the least, had not brought home to the mind of the Porte any belief in the conversion of the English Cabinet to the "violet" policy. It was even hinted that in a series of asides he had been careful to assure them that whatever he might be officially instructed by Lord Derby to say, they might rely upon Lord Beaconsfield's Government in the last resort.

Thus not only was there an impression that the "red" element in the Government had for the second time, in order that they might definitely commit the country to their policy, purposely kept the public in the dark as to facts which would have mitigated the anti-Russian feeling which had been roused, but also an impression that the policy at last adopted by the Cabinet at large—the policy of enforcing some measure of emancipation, grudging though it might be—was being thwarted by the British ambassador at Constantinople.

Some were disposed to see in the recalcitrancy of the Porte an indication that whatever might be the case as to the conversion of the Government at home, at all events it had not affected Sir Henry Elliot. Sir Henry Elliot was regarded as embodying in himself the ultra-"red" policy, and with such a representative at Constantinople, it was doubted if effectual pressure was being brought to bear.

> It is a singular fact, not to be overlooked, that the German ambassador, General Schweinitz, arriving at Yalta simultaneously with our ambassador, told him that hopes were entertained that the armistice would be granted by the Porte if it should not be opposed by Sir Henry Elliot. We do not for a moment suppose that Sir Henry Elliot ever contemplated opposing the armistice; but how deep and widespread must have been the belief in his partisan action when General Schweinitz could have ventured to make such an observation to Lord Augustus Loftus. It appears to us extraordinary that the imputation conveyed in it should have been addressed to a British Minister.—*T.* Nov. 24th.

The Correspondent of the *Daily News* at Constantinople, writing under date November 17th, says—

> I hope that Englishmen have thoroughly realised by this time what is the position to which the diplomacy of our Government is generally believed to have brought the nation. England proposed an administrative autonomy for Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, and thereby earned for herself the gratitude of the Christian races. Everybody here believes that she has abandoned this position. The Turk is jubilant at England's desertion of her proposals. The Christian rayah is mute with astonishment at it. Russians and Germans profess to be indignant with us. The pro-Turkish English party are triumphant in this belief. I have met with no one who entertains any doubt of the fact itself. It is impossible, therefore, not to assume that it is true, impossible not to believe that Sir Henry Elliot has done his best to explain that he and England do not mean what they said. . . . I am writing always on the supposition that our Government has drawn back. If it has not, and any member of the Government will make the grateful announcement that it has not, such a notification will be the most awakening shock to the Turks that they have received during the present struggle, and will equally surprise every Englishman in Constantinople, without exception.—*Correspondent D. N.* Nov. 25th.

The Correspondent of the *Times* at Pera, also writing on the 17th, says that the acceptance of the proposal of the Powers at a

final council of the Porte to be held the next day, was already looked upon as certain. He adds—

> It appears that upon the suggestion and encouragement of Sir Henry Elliot, the Grand Vizier is still bent on putting forward certain reserves and restrictions which it will probably not be difficult for the representatives of the guaranteeing Powers to overrule. Sir Henry observed that although Her Majesty's Government was the original proposer of certain reforms and liberties to be bestowed upon the disturbed Provinces, all necessity to insist upon them had been in a great measure removed by the scheme of constitutional government projected by Midhat Pasha and now under discussion by the General Council. Sir Henry Elliot urged besides that Turkey would come all the easier out of the ordeal of the Conference the readier she showed herself to stand upon her right by proving that she might have in any extremity force upon her side. . . . How faithfully in all these transactions with the Porte Sir Henry Elliot interprets the mind or follows the directions of his Government will be best known in London; but here friends of peace have nothing more at heart than that the Conference should speedily meet, and that Lord Salisbury may soon reach Constantinople. All depends upon the preliminary arrangements. . . . Only let the Marquis of Salisbury and General Ignatieff shake hands as true men, only let them sit down to work without reserve, without the apprehension of preconception or *arrière pensée* on either side, and all will be well, and the peace of Europe, as well as the just and humane treatment of all the subjects of the Porte, will be assured.—*Correspondent T.* Nov. 23rd.

Lord Derby at once telegraphed to Sir Henry Elliot,[1] and the next afternoon he received his reply:—

> The language attributed to me by the *Times* Correspondent mentioned in your Lordship's telegram, is incorrect. The statement that I advised the Grand Vizier to bring forward reserves or restrictions is the exact reverse of the truth, and I have never intimated that the scheme of constitutional government removes the necessity for the reforms and liberties proposed by Her Majesty's Government for the disturbed Provinces; but I have said that when the new measures are published, with which we are not yet acquainted, it will be necessary to see whether they confer upon the Provinces in question that which was demanded for them. For months past I have been urging the Porte to lose no time in removing the disabilities under which the Christians labour. The statement that I have urged that Turkey would come all the easier out of the ordeal of the Conference by holding herself ready to stand upon her rights, and by proving that she might at any time have force on her side, is absolutely false.—*Elliot to Derby*, Nov. 24th.[2]

[1] *Turkey*, i. 1877, Nos. 1,042.
[2] *Ibid.* No. 1048. This communication appeared in the *Times* of Nov. 28th.

The impression nevertheless remained that however desirous Sir Henry Elliot might be of a measure of "red" reform, he would do all in his power to resist "emancipation." Thus Lord Beaconsfield and Sir Henry Elliot were looked upon as men who had been working in the dark to secure the predominance of the "red" policy. And now it seemed Lord Beaconsfield and Sir Henry Elliot were found out. The late episode appeared as a last desperate attempt to engage England in a war with Russia, an attempt which had finally failed, and in failing had brought great discredit on its authors. Men thought of Sir Henry Elliot as contemptuously pushed aside to make way for the stronger man, and of Lord Beaconsfield as a vanquished and discredited member of his own Cabinet.

> The *Spectator* speaks of a rumour that Lord Beaconsfield had resigned, a rumour which first spread on the 18th, and became so strong on the 23rd that the *Times* of the 24th inserted in a prominent place an oddly worded denial. The writer thinks however that Lord Beaconsfield can keep secrets, and that his retirement, when it comes, will be a bolt out of the blue.—(Nov. 25th.)

The London Correspondent of the *South Wales Daily News* also speaks of the same rumour, with the addition that Lord Derby had succeeded to the premiership.

> Influenced by these reports the Stock Exchange suddenly became very firm. (Nov. 25th.) Evidently Lord Beaconsfield has been overruled, and the Muscovite assertions are now with qualifications accepted by the Cabinet. . . . He is no longer the author of England's foreign policy. He does not rule his own Government. No Ministry could fight with the whole literary class against our entering into a struggle.—(Dec. 8th.)

b. The Reconciliation Mature.—On the termination of the second episode and its erubescence, the emancipation policy re-emerged from the temporary obscuration which had fallen over it.

> Day by day our true policy of co-operating with Russia in bringing about a pacific settlement of the present discussions is better understood.—*T.* Nov. 25th.

> Not more than two or three weeks since it was frequently said that our business is first to maintain the peace of Europe, and secondly, as a subsidiary object, to promote the improvement of the condition of the subjects of the Sultan in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria.[1] We have now learnt that the true order of considering the question is the reverse of this.—*T.* Nov. 28th.

[1] See the *Times* writing in this sense, *ante*, p. 74.

With the perception of the feasibility of meeting the Czar's expressed desire to attain a solution in concert with England, and the accompanying discredit which fell upon Lord Beaconsfield's policy, the Reconciliation reaches its maturity. But though it was mature it was not complete.

In the first place there were a few who thought the proposals of the English Government so inadequate that they could not be accepted as fulfilling the exigencies of the Emancipation policy, even though the Government were credited with the determination to carry their own proposals through. In the next place, there was an undercurrent of distrust lest the "red" influence should after all predominate in the Cabinet, and a misgiving that even the meagre emancipation which seemed to be proffered would be withheld.

The dissatisfaction which arose from a conviction of the inadequacy of the solution which the diplomatists were formulating, found a spokesman in Mr. E. A. Freeman.

> Experience tells us that a scheme of practical independence—an independence not inconsistent with a tributary relation to the Sultan—will work. Experience shows us that anything short of this will not work. There are difficulties on the one side; there are impossibilities on the other. No policy can be weaker than that of patching up a settlement which will be upset in a few years simply because it may need a little further exertion, a little further exercise of the reasoning faculty, to make a settlement which will have a reasonable chance of being permanent.—*E. A. Freeman* in *T.* Nov. 8th.[1]

Shortly before the diplomatists gathered at Constantinople it was rumoured that Russia had a solution to propose which hinged on the appointment of Christian governors, and the control of Europe over the execution of measures decreed by local consular courts.[2]

> It is not for me to guess with what motives these particular proposals are made. . . . If they can be carried out at all, they will be a mere sop for the moment. If the six Powers declare that thus much, and nothing more, shall be done for the revolted lands, those lands may be driven by sheer force to submit to their fate; but it will be only by sheer force, and it will only be for a moment. . . . It is for the six Powers to make some better

[1] Letter entitled "Practical Politics."

[2] The proposals attributed to Russia emanated from General Ignatieff. On Nov. 18th, Sir Henry Elliot sends a paper containing "General Ignatieff's eleven proposals" to Lord Derby, with the remark that the paper has no official character, and appears to have been drawn up for the newspapers "to which I see it was immediately communicated" (*Turkey*, i. 1877, No. 1078).

> settlement than this. The direct rule of the Turk must for ever cease in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, in Epeiros, Thessaly, and Crete. The details are for diplomatists to settle. It is for them to trace out frontiers, for them to sketch out forms of government. It is plain that some of those lands will gain most by annexation to already existing States, that others will gain most by the creation of new States. In either case the great object will be gained. . . . Anything short of this is child's play; it is simply weaving a web to have it torn in pieces again at the first favourable moment.—*E. A. Freeman* in *T.* Nov. 23rd.[1]

The lingering distrust in the genuineness of the conversion of the Government was, to a certain extent, kept up by the tone of the "Mahometan press." The *Standard* protests against

> the attempts made by some of the Liberal leaders and by a portion of the Liberal press to separate the mission of Lord Salisbury from the general policy of the Government. . . . There is but one Turkish policy for which Lord Beaconsfield, as head of the Government, is primarily responsible, which Lord Salisbury has gone out to Constantinople to support to the utmost extent of the British influence.—(Nov. 28th.)

The *Pall Mall Gazette* endeavours to disabuse the credulous of false hopes.

> There is reason [the *Daily News* thinks] to believe that the policy of the Government may be defeated by opportune treachery on Lord Salisbury's part to the intructions with which he set out. "Of course, Lord Salisbury is in theory subordinate to the Cabinet and to the Foreign Minister from whom he receives his instructions; but in such cases as these the stronger will has a faculty of dictating the orders which it is to obey." We believe these hopes to be altogether delusive. . . . We have no fear whatever that Lord Salisbury will assent to any other guarantees than such as will commend themselves to the Government which despatched him—least of all that he will play false to his instructions—(for that is what the *Daily News* evidently means)—by sanctioning an armed occupation of the disturbed provinces on the part of Russia.—*P. M. G.* Dec. 14th.

On the other hand, the speeches of three Ministers at this juncture went to confirm the impression that the Cabinet had toned down their Treaty Legalism until all that was obnoxious in the doctrine had disappeared.

> With all due respect to Turkey, I would say that of course the time has come when all what I may call the "waste paper currency" of the Turkish promises shall be paid in sterling coin; but that does not mean war, and that does not mean the breach of the

[1] Letter entitled "The Russian Proposals."

treaty on which the Conference has been formed—namely, the maintenance of the integrity of the Turkish Empire.—*Mr. Cross at Birmingham, T.* Nov. 21st.

We could not desire a better statement of the rights we enjoy in co-operation with our allies.—*T.* Nov. 21st.

One passage in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech at Barnstaple expressed the duties of Lord Salisbury in a way with which little fault will be found either by the opponents of the Ministry or by Russia herself. We do not, he said, mean to tear up the Treaty of Paris and throw it to the winds. "We have to consider what is the spirit of that treaty." We must consider "the meaning of the engagement into which Turkey entered, or practically entered, by embodying in the Treaty of 1856 the provisions for the better government of her Christian subjects." The Chancellor of the Exchequer goes a step further by admitting that we must look to acts as well as words. "Events," as he mildly says, "have happened since" 1856. Yes, many events have happened, including the systematic breach of solemn pledges for twenty years, and the consequent outbreak of several insurrections, with the accompaniment of two horrible massacres. Hence, says Sir Stafford Northcote, we must see whether "further precaution and further guarantees are not necessary in order to secure the ample fulfilment of those promises which Turkey made." These words might be appropriately used by General Ignatieff himself. It is true that the Chancellor of the Exchequer still believes in the power of Turkey to keep her promises; but he obviously means that she must be helped by foreign Powers, else it would have been alike useless and mischievous for England to propose a Conference. —*T.* Dec. 15th.

[Lord Salisbury] would take care that effectual guarantees should be given that these reforms should be true and effective; that they should not be, as they had been, false wandering fires of the night, calculated only to mislead and deceive.—*Lord Carnarvon at Dulverton,* Dec. 19th.

Mr. Gladstone himself, if he still thought vigilance necessary, at last believed in the Conversion.

I recognise in [Lord Salisbury's] mission a ground of hope; but the steps taken by the Government generally have been so equivocal, and the declaration of the Prime Minister in particular so blameworthy, that I am certain there is much ground for continued vigilance on the part of all men who feel interested in the question. Especially I repeat that if Russia has selfish designs in the East no policy can so effectually promote those designs as a policy of coldness and indifference on our part towards the Christian populations, which can have no other effect than that of throwing them into her arms.—*Letter from Mr. Gladstone addressed to the Labour Representation League, D. N.* Nov. 27th.

> I view with extreme satisfaction that energy of conviction which leads the people of Darlington to watch with an increasing vigilance the course of the Eastern Question, and thus to confute the pretences of those who think so ill of the people of this country as coolly to assert that in the interval between September and November they have changed their minds. I look upon the mission of Lord Salisbury as a contradiction of the speech of the Prime Minister at Guildhall. If you meet again I venture to hope you will, while speaking plainly on the purposes in view, give to that mission a word of good will.—*Letter from Mr. Gladstone read at a public meeting held at Darlington to appoint Delegates to the forthcoming National Conference.—T.* Dec. 2nd.

The attitude of the constituents of the great mass of opinion which had been roused by the events of the summer, was on the whole one of faith that the Government had at last come to agree on the necessity of joining with the other Powers to enforce, if an imperative attitude towards the Porte should be necessary, some measure of emancipation, and that after three months of incessant urging, and at least one false start, they had now really committed themselves to the "violet" policy. Lord Derby was believed to have overcome his repugnance to the notion of admitting any foreign force within the territorial limits of the Ottoman Empire, and to be exercising himself with the question whether that force should be described as a *corps d'armée* or a *gendarmerie*. Moreover, always premising that a real measure of emancipation was recognised as the indispensable condition of any real settlement, there was no disposition to insist on any particular solution. If there were difficulties about autonomy which did not attach to administration of the provinces by an international commission, if some elaborate contrivance for saving appearances by preserving the shadow of the Sultan's sovereignty would facilitate the Porte's assent, so let it be. Men might still prefer one or the other solution, but these were details, and of comparatively little importance so long as they did not infringe upon the great principle that it must somehow be put out of the power of the Turks to treat the Provincials as subjects with whom they could deal at their own will and pleasure.

> There must be guarantees, and they must be adequate. This is now universally admitted. We need not repeat again the forcible expression of Mr. Cross to show that the Ministers of the Crown recognise the peremptory nature of this condition. What now remains is that they shall not shrink from the application of their principle in practice. . . . . The guarantee must take the

form of a force sufficient to secure the completion of the programme of reforms that may be adopted. Let us take care that it is not more than sufficient. Let it be chosen so that it may be trusted to discharge the functions intrusted to it with fidelity, and that there may be no difficulty in withdrawing it after the work of reorganisation has been fairly accomplished; but do not let us do injustice to our own intelligence by haggling over points that are immaterial, and by seeking to undo in practice what we have declared necessary in principle. . . . . If [Lord Salisbury] has once admitted to himself that the guarantee of force must be real and effective, he will not shrink from the consequences of the admission. He will meet General Ignatieff as one strong man meets another, and a common agreement will arise out of mutual respect.—*T.* Nov. 26th.

Not only among his opponents but within the Conservative party, and possibly in the sacred inclosure of the Cabinet itself, the feeling is spreading that Lord Beaconsfield's policy must be got rid of, if not Lord Beaconsfield himself. A step has been made in that direction. He is no longer the dictator; he is scarcely even the most important member of his own Government. —*D. N.* Dec. 5th.

What becomes of the policy with which our Government started when this crisis began? What becomes of the policy which Lord Derby held to at what we may call the turning-point of the crisis, when the Russian proposals were made to him in last June? What becomes of the policy which, so far as we can recollect, Lord Beaconsfield has always professed in public to uphold? That policy was, that the Ottoman Government must be recognised as the absolute master of the Turkish provinces; that we must not and dare not come between the bark and the tree; and that all we could possibly do would be, when Turkey had crushed her rebels—which we admonished her that she had better do at once and completely—to appeal to her to deal as mercifully with the provinces as her ideas of her own interests would allow. No one can say that that was not the principle of our policy again and again enforced and illustrated in speech and in despatch. The backers and led-captains of our Ministry are anxious to forget all that now, but it was too often and too clearly explained, and may defy oblivion. From that principle of policy to Lord Salisbury in Constantinople arranging with the Russian Envoy for measures to compel Turkey to do her duty should she try to evade it, what has conducted us? Simply the expression of public opinion declaring that the Government were wrong in their policy, and must abandon it altogether. They have abandoned it altogether. They have found out their mistake, and are now doing what not long since they declared that it would be impossible for them to do. We give them all the credit they deserve for their recognition of facts. But we cannot feel much respect for the candour, except at the expense of the

intelligence, of some of their champions who still argue that their policy of to-day is the same as their policy of June, and that the Government are consistent in refusing to do a thing and in doing it.—*D. N. circa* Dec. 9th.

On the 9th of November the Prime Minister defied Russia to any number of campaigns not less than three. On the 9th of December it became known with some certainty in this country that we were very likely indeed to concur in the recommendations for preparing which Russia was thus threatened. How did so sudden a change come about? Simply, we presume, because in the meantime less eager and fantastic spirits than our Prime Minister had finally become satisfied that he was entirely out of tune with the feeling and the resolve of the country. It is alarming even still to think of what might have happened if the country had gone to sleep in full confidence in the wisdom of its rulers. It is painful to think of the time, the opportunities, the lives that have been lost while unofficial Englishmen were trying to educate their Government. There is no reason whatever why we should not have made in last June the attempt we are making now. Nothing has been gained by this delay; we need not dwell on all that has been lost by it. Certainly the Government deserve some credit for having completely abandoned the unfortunate position which they occupied a short time ago. But the general principle of our system does not gain much in strength or credit from the manifestations of the fact that only what Mr. Gladstone called the "vituperated public meetings" prevented our rulers from leading the country utterly astray. A somnambulist ought to be awakened gently, if possible. But if he is going to throw himself out of window, it may be necessary to seize him, and drag him back. We have had thus somewhat rudely to arouse our Government, and pluck it from its perilous sleep-walking. That of course is something of which all must approve under the circumstances. But it leaves, too, the uncomfortable conviction that public opinion will have to keep broadly awake lest our Ministers should take to dreaming again. Parliament has just been prorogued to the 8th of February. There are two months, therefore, during which volunteer watchers must faithfully keep guard.—*D. N.* Dec. 11th.

Lord Salisbury has not gone to Constantinople to maintain that Turkey may be trusted to put her house in order without help or pressure from abroad, and he can have had no debate with General Ignatieff as to the necessity of some guarantees. The real question is, what the guarantees shall be; and the answer must be framed with a due regard to the particular nature of the misrule and to the general interests of England. . . . Russia naturally thinks that the best security would be found in an occupying army furnished by herself; but she may be ready to set aside so bold a scheme now that she sees what jealousies and fears it has excited. . . . . We should not be surprised, therefore, if General Ignatieff

were to propose that during the introduction of a reformed system of rule order should be kept in Bosnia and Bulgaria by an armed foreign *gendarmerie* [contributed by several of the Great Powers, or drawn from one of the smaller European States.] But Turkey would doubtless object to the intrusion of even the mildest kind of a foreign police. . . . The diplomatists will not make the mistake of drawing up a scheme which the Porte would certainly reject, unless at least one of them intends that such a plan shall, if necessary, be enforced by war. But it is possible that even a proposal to appoint a foreign police may not exhaust the conciliatory spirit of General Ignatieff. He may surprise and please his fellow diplomatists by agreeing that little visible change shall be made in the local fabric of Ottoman authority; but we may rest assured that he will insist on the establishment of some real guarantees. Whatever form they may take, they must mean some transfer of authority, and therefore they will be vehemently opposed by Turkey. The slightest encouragement from England, in fact, would make her peremptorily reject every suggestion made by Russia. But this country would be heinously culpable if, in view of enormous and inveterate misrule, it were simply to object to every real guarantee.—*T.* Dec. 15th.

It was in the mood of those who believe that they have substantially carried their point, that men watched Lord Salisbury's progress to Constantinople by way of Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Rome.[1]

[1] Compare *Punch*, Dec. 16th.

"Lift up thy brow, renownèd Salisbury,
And with a great heart heave away this storm."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CONFERENCE PERIOD.

§ 1. *Cessation of Agitation.*

WITH the mature reconciliation, the attitude of Public Opinion underwent a marked change. It passed from an imperative into an observant mood. It allowed its extra-constitutional action to fall into abeyance. This observant attitude was maintained through the two periods which followed, viz. the Conference period on which we now enter, and the Parliamentary period which extends from the opening of the session on February 8th, to the Five Nights' Debate on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions in May.

The reason why Public Opinion at the opening of the Conference period should desist from efforts to press directly upon the Executive Government is obvious enough. It believed that the effort had already succeeded. Besides, the question had passed into the hands of the professed diplomatists. Just as some twelve months before, at the time of the Andrassy Note, the belief that matters were under care had calmed the anxieties of Public Opinion, so it was now. The situation of a year ago seemed to have recurred. It was not to be doubted that the English Cabinet had learnt by experience the absolute necessity of applying a remedy which should go to the root of the evil, or to be supposed that the mistakes of a year ago would recur also.

It is true that as the Constantinople Conference dragged on, people gradually became more and more doubtful of the intentions of the English Government to insist that the Porte should really give up their sovereignty; but by this time the meeting of Parliament was in sight, and day by day the time was coming closer when the constitutional organ of Public Opinion would again spring into

activity.[1] People looked to Parliament to enforce their wishes better than they could themselves, and it was not till they recognised the failure of Parliament to give effect to what they regarded as the preponderating opinion out of doors, that agitation, as we shall see, was renewed. Thus as compared with the Reconciliation period the differentia of the Conference period was the cessation of agitation, at least of agitation intended to act directly upon the Government. There were still meetings when members met their constituents, and speeches in plenty; the interest excited in the whole matter was too keen for this not to be the case; but these meetings were rather of the nature of a marshalling of the forces and a blowing of the trumpets preliminary to the parliamentary campaign, than of agitation in the proper sense.

§ 2. *The St. James's Hall Conference.*

The St. James's Hall Conference—so was called the demonstration of the newly-formed Association for influencing the course of the Eastern Question[2]—marks the transition of Public Opinion from the mandatory to the observant attitude.

> By a coincidence which will no doubt be placed in a ridiculous light by those unfriendly to the proceedings, this first sitting of the Conference will be held just as the Diplomatists have met at Constantinople.—*T.* Dec. 8th.

The Conference, said the *Daily News*,

> will find its work half done before it assembles.—(Dec. 8th.)

The key-note was struck by Mr. Gladstone in his speech.

> We want to cut [Lord Salisbury] adrift from that Guildhall speech.—*Mr. Gladstone* at St. James's Hall.

The Conference, in its inception, was meant as a protest that the sentiments which had inspired the September agitation were not to be lightly brushed aside by the Premier as a mere passing aberration of the public mind. By the time the day fixed for the meeting had arrived, it had passed into something like a demonstration of satisfaction that at last there was some prospect that those sentiments were to regulate the national policy.

> Although for the present the Eastern Question has passed into the region of diplomacy, it has been thought desirable that English

[1] Parliament was summoned for Feb. 8th. See *T.* Dec. 11th.
[2] *Ante*, p. 110.

sentiment should continue to make itself heard and felt on the subject. In some quarters it is supposed that the public meetings which were provoked by the horrors of Turkish repression in Bulgaria were a mere temporary ebullition of national feeling; and certain orators addressing select audiences have boldly declared that what they are pleased to describe as an aberration of the popular mind has now entirely passed away. The National Conference on the Eastern Question which is to be held in London on Friday, December 8th, will, we hope, open the eyes of the Government to the fact that the people of this country are as determined now as they were in the heat of a generous excitement to secure substantial justice for the Christian populations of European Turkey. Unless we are greatly mistaken, it will be seen on that occasion that Public Opinion is far from being that thing of caprice and instability which the friends of the Turk desire that it should be, and endeavour to persuade themselves that it is.—*D. N.* Nov. 29th.

We publish this morning, in our advertising columns, the list, complete up to the moment at which it was prepared, of the Conveners of the National Conference on the Eastern Question which is to be held on Friday next in St. James's Hall. Probably so many names distinguished in literature, in art, in philosophy, in theology, in science, and in scholarship of various orders, have never been brought together for any political or social purpose. The cultivated intelligence of England is more than merely represented in this list; it is present there in great force; and in each department the greatest names lead the rest. Intellectual England, that select portion of the nation whose business it is to cultivate the higher faculties of research, of speculation, and of creative art, whether with the pen, the brush, or the chisel, and the men most eminent in the several Churches as religious teachers, are there. The list answers in the completest way the shallow criticism which, when the manifestation was over, and its censors had presence of mind and courage enough to speak, disparaged the display of national feeling in the months of August and September. That was set down as a momentary outburst of generous but extravagant sentiment on the part of the more impulsive portions of the English people, in indignation meetings assembled. After an interval of weeks, the deliberate judgment of the most cultivated and trained classes is recorded in the same sense. That the nation is behind these classes, and supports them, as it was before them in the popular movements of the early autumn, the meetings held in Manchester yesterday afternoon and in Birmingham yesterday evening—meetings which are but the pioneers of others—help to show.—*D. N.* Dec. 5th.

It is a most significant fact that at such a crisis and after so long a period of controversy a great movement should manifest itself in the direction which this Conference indicates. It may tell the public little that is new; it may draw up no efficient scheme for

Bosnian or Bulgarian tax-gathering; but as a demonstration of opinion it is remarkable and powerful. It shows the deliberate judgment of a most influential class. In spite of continuous appeals to national jealousy, in spite of the authority of the Government and of the compact Party which has hitherto followed it, in spite of international traditions supported by great names past and present, a body of men representing the most cultivated as well as the most sober-minded and conscientious sections of the community have associated themselves to protest against an alliance with the Turkish Power. If nothing comes of the "National Conference" except the publication of the list of "Conveners" it will still have been successful. The names are those of men distinguished in every department of intellectual exertion, of men eminent by position or by service to the State, of men who may be fairly taken to represent the various interests or associations of the country. It would be simple presumption in any one to affect contempt for a movement thus supported. Let those who would disparage the Conference try whether they can obtain any similar list of names in favour of their own Eastern policy. We have never known any association for a political object which has obtained support over so large a part of the scale of English society. We have never known men combine who represented such diversities of opinion, or such traditional antagonisms.—*T.* Dec. 8th.

The names of the Conveners, the list of gentlemen who were present, and the crowd of delegates from provincial towns, suffice to show that it was a representative meeting in a very broad sense. . . . Peers who usually keep themselves free from the entanglements of Party, men of letters, men of science, professors, clergymen belonging both to the Church and to Dissenting bodies, speak for classes which, although they generally avoid the rougher strifes of the hustings, represent a great force of public opinion. Turkish rule has shocked elementary feelings of right and wrong. The Conference may help to show that the determination to free ourselves from all responsibility for the crimes of Turkey is not confined to what may be called the impulsive classes. The Duke of Westminster and the Bishop of Oxford had some right to say that it represented the intellectual culture of this country.—*T.* Dec. 9th.

The *Daily Telegraph* says that if the meeting to be held on Friday in St. James's Hall fails in political fruit it must be because there is almost every tree of knowledge represented in it, except that of public affairs. . . Among the Liberal members of Parliament strongly pressed to attend was Mr. Joseph Cowen, of Newcastle, who has made so favourable a mark in the House of Commons as an independent and fearless advocate of advanced views. Mr. Cowen declined to be present, on the grounds, plainly but temperately put, that he regarded the convening of such a gathering as inimical to the national interest and as calculated to endanger

the desirable settlement of affairs on the Continent. Now this is real patriotism.—(Dec. 6th.)

The *Standard* objects that the promoters of the meeting—(literary persons, doctrinaires, and so on) cannot make a gathering "National" whose whole object and aim is to promote a policy contrary to the interests of the nation.—(Dec. 8th.)

The *Pall Mall Gazette*, after having been at some pains to analyse the list of "Conveners," says the effort to make the demonstration a national one, must be pronounced a failure.—(Dec. 9th.)

Priests, professors, poets, painters, politicians—all save fools—
Why leave your desks and easels, church or chapel pulpits, schools?
What are you to the Eastern Question—what the Question unto you—
That you must have your Conference, and make all this ado?
Have you no fear of morning douche, or evening shower-bath chill,
From Jupiter Junior's mud-squirt, or the *Pall Mall's* keener quill?
No dread of club-room quizzing, or Society's slow sneer,
That in protest against Moslem rule you dare to muster here?

. . . . . .

You don't believe in Elliot—believer in the Turk?
You do believe in Salisbury—if free his will to work?
You want to let Lord Derby know what his "employers" feel,
And to convince the Turk he must not count on England's steel?
You want to give the Conference at Stamboul a good lead?
You wish the Northern Emperors—yes, Bear and all—good speed?
Such common wish, and common cause, your various sections links?
I see—'tis Bull 'gainst Beaconsfield—'tis Lion against Sphinx!

—*Punch*, Dec. 16th.

The Conference at St. James's Hall was held on Dec. 8th at two sittings. The first was presided over by the Duke of Westminster, and the second by the Earl of Shaftesbury.[1]

Numerous and important speeches were delivered denouncing the "red" policy, and expounding the "violet" notions.

The following utterances may be more particularly noted.

I should beg to ask deferentially why, if these reforms cannot be brought about without actual military occupation, the fleets and the armies of England should not be sent to Constantinople, not to oppose Russia, but to coerce the Turk? (Loud cheers.) God grant that it may not be so! Every man will hope and pray that such an emergency will not arise, but should it come,

[1] The assembly was convened by circulars. Among those applying for admission preference was given to special delegates and to official persons; of these two kinds more than twelve hundred having a distinctly representative character were present. One hundred and seventeen places are mentioned as "some of the towns" which were represented at the Conference in addition to the metropolis and its suburbs. See *Report of the Proceedings of the National Conference*, published by direction of the Committee of the Eastern Question Association by James Clarke and Co.

as it possibly may, I do not think we should act honourably in not sending our armies and fleets to accomplish these great objects.—*Duke of Westminster.*

We are not come together—at least I am sure that I am not—to oppose or embarrass Her Majesty's Government, nay, we come to support it, to give it all the influence we can command, for the attainment of this great purpose. Let us set aside a while all but Lord Derby, and let his despatch of October last to Sir H. Elliot be the text to proceed upon. His language is vigorous, emphatic and unmistakable. . . . Nothing can be better as stated on paper. It is for us to see that they become realities. We cannot attempt—it would be folly to do so—to prescribe modes, measures, and details. But these principles and these conditions we accept, and we openly declare that we will not relax our efforts, that we will give him no rest, until these principles and these conditions shall be as firm and unalterable as human laws can make them. Lord Derby cannot recede from his own despatch, nor do I believe that he desires it. I have a high opinion of Lord Derby, he is a man of intelligence, a man of honour, a man with a strong sense of duty. . . . Let us say that we are prepared to forget and to forgive. (Cries of "No" and "Hear, hear.") I am not going to be over ready, I assure you, but hear what I say. Will you not leave open a place of repentance for all? Let us condone the past in the glories of the future. (Cheers.) All is in the hands of Her Majesty's Ministers. One real, unmistakable announcement will disabuse the Turkish rulers of their vain confidence and make them as compliant as children. (Cheers.)—*Lord Shaftesbury.*

Perish the interests of England, perish our dominion in India,[1] rather than that we should strike one blow or speak one word on behalf of the wrong against the right.—*Mr. E. A. Freeman.*

Forgive! There was one Minister at least who never ought to be forgiven. (Cheers.) He liked to speak plainly, and he said that that Minister was the Prime Minister. (Renewed cheers.)—*Professor Fawcett.*

It is my opinion that in all this I have been reading the Cabinet generally had little or no concern. I cannot acquit them; they ought to have concern; but I do believe and am firmly convinced that operations down to a recent period on most important and practical points have been really directed by the mind, the firm—I must give him this credit—and very tenacious mind of the Prime Minister, acting through the unhappily too yielding mind of the Foreign Secretary. . . . . We are not here to lay down plans for the government of those provinces, and to teach

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 361, *note*.

a policy to Lord Salisbury or to anybody else; but I will venture to place a model before his eyes, and that is the model supplied by Mr. Canning in the case of Greece.[1]—*Mr. Gladstone.*

If we turn to the comments of the newspapers after the meeting, we find on the one hand that it is regarded as a weighty expression of the national opinion, calculated to strengthen the hands of the Government in their new departure, and on the other hand we find efforts to minimise the weight of the demonstration, and a tendency to bring against it the old charges objected to the Agitation.

Most of the speakers displayed a studious wish to refrain, so far as they could, from directly attacking the Ministry, and there was a general desire, not to embarrass, but to strengthen the hands of Lord Salisbury. He has certainly no reason to complain of the way in which he himself was treated. But, of course, it was assumed that he would truly and unflinchingly express the real mind of England to the Porte. . . . . To all save the wilfully blind it must now be clear that the agitation of August and September last was no transient flash of emotion, but that it expressed a profound and fixed determination. The lull after the storm was supposed to express the fear of the country that it had gone too far in its denunciations of Turkish rule. When Russia unveiled her plans of intervention the natural suspicion of her designs revived the hopes of some, and the dread of others, that a little careful diplomatic management would make England "drift" into another Russian War. But the Conference is one of many signs that this country will not help the Turks to resist the only measures by which a just system of rule can be established in Bosnia and Bulgaria. Our own Government must be fully aware of that resolve. . . . . But there is too much reason to believe that the ruling Turks still rely on the aid of England. If so, they cannot be too soon or emphatically warned that they are under a profound delusion, for, if it should continue to mislead them, it would put an end to all hopes of peace. Were Parliament sitting, the real situation of the Porte would be made clear to it in twenty-four hours by an unequivocal display of national opinion. In the absence of Parliament, public meetings may do the same kind of service in an imperfect way, and that is, perhaps, the best plea for the Conference. Some of the speeches were not free from wild proposals; but, on the whole, the meeting will not embarrass Lord Salisbury if he truly expresses the feeling of the nation. . . . . The feeling of the Conference was that to define the exact nature of those guarantees lay beyond its province; but it also indicated a belief that some kind of foreign occupation would be

[1] "Policy" used here in the sense in which the word "Solution" is used in Part II. See vol. i. p. 180.

necessary. One speaker after another declared that if England and Russia were united, they could still prevent war, and no words were more loudly cheered than the protests against unworthy suspicions of the Czar.—*T.* Dec. 9th.

Professions of a determination not to make war are not usually the declarations which wake the thunders of popular applause. Crowds have commonly a good deal of the war spirit in them. . . . . Therefore, when a great crowd of Englishmen are heard cheering to the echo every protest against the drawing of the sword in a certain quarrel, it may be taken for granted that the motive for those cheers is not merely the doctrine which the Peace Society so earnestly teach. The quarrel is detestable, the cause is odious; that is the explanation. The most heedless Minister must have learned some caution if he had heard the peals of applause which followed every declaration yesterday that no hand of ours should uphold Turkey in war if her perverseness and obstinacy should bring war on her. Not less decided was the feeling of the meeting against a policy of systematic distrust towards Russia.—*D. N.* Dec. 9th.

The *Daily Telegraph* contrasts the noble spectacle afforded by other critical hours of our history, when party spirit has been silenced for the sake of the greatness and welfare of England, with "a savage blow dealt to paralyse the hand of the Government." If the convention at St. James's Hall desires peace, it will scrupulously avoid any incitements which may tempt Russia along that false road which, starting in a pilgrimage of piety, ends in a march of ambition and blood.—(Dec. 8th.)

The ferocity of some of the philanthropists who attended the meeting is among the most strange and terrible phenomena of our times. Half the orators seemed literally to gloat over the idea of a sanguinary onslaught upon the poor Arabs and Anatolians who must die by thousands for the sins of the Circassians and Roumelians if war is to be the issue. The road marked out yesterday leads to reformation by dreadful carnage and by hateful conflict of races and creeds.—(Dec. 9th.)

The *Standard* says, the *soi-disant* men of intellect and conscience will damage the very cause which they pretend to have at heart, namely, the cause of peace. They have made almost inevitable that war between Russia and Turkey which it has been the chief business of the British Government to prevent. —(Dec. 9th.)

The *Pall Mall Gazette* denies that the meeting was either a "Conference" or "National." It started from a sham—if, indeed, it ought not in strict fairness to be called a lie, that there was any willingness or desire for a war to support the Turkish Empire as such. If we may trust the reports, nobody was more cheered last night (save that great ecclesiastical agitator, Mr. Gladstone himself) than Mr. Freeman; and nobody insisted upon the sham with as much audacity. What our anxious orators

know is, that there *is* something we are quite prepared to fight for, and shall and must fight for, if we are driven to it; our own interests and our own civilisation.—(Dec. 9th.)

The *Morning Post* says if those who meet are actuated by fairness and common sense even the most ardent among them may find cause to bless instead of to curse the policy of the Government. No European Power has more at heart the improvement of the position of the subjects of the Sultan, and it will be found when the history of the Conference comes to be narrated that no more sincere reformer was present than Lord Salisbury.—(Dec. 8th.)

Again, it is glad to acknowledge that the general tone of the Conference was marked by a laudable moderation. Still, the views of anti-Turks only, based upon half-knowledge and misconceptions, were recorded. Such a meeting cannot be considered as "national," and certainly at a juncture like the present it cannot be productive of good practical effects.—(Dec. 9th.)

§ 3. *The Constantinople Conference.*

Meanwhile the diplomatists had gathered at Constantinople.[1] The representatives of the six Powers held a number of meetings at the Russian Embassy by way of preliminary conference, from which Turkey was excluded. These preliminaries occupied the interval from December 14th to December 22nd.

A result was finally agreed upon, which provided for a rectification of the frontier of Montenegro, the restoration of the *status quo* with regard to Servia, and for the introduction of certain administrative reforms into Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, the execution of which were to be supervised by International Commissions.

Moreover as a precaution against Moslem fanaticism, a military force, or "gendarmerie," of 6,000 men, to be furnished by Belgium or some other minor State, was to be introduced. Russia announced that the result of the preliminary Conference represented the "extreme and irreducible minimum" which she thought it indispensable to claim for the security of the Provincials.

The full Conference met for the first time on December 23rd, under the presidency of Safvet Pasha, and the "irreducible minimum" was formally laid before the Turkish Plenipotentiaries. They showed no disposition to accept it. During the sitting

[1] See the voluminous Blue Book, *Turkey*, ii. 1877, for the official documents, and Argyll, chap. vii. for an account of the proceedings.

salvoes of artillery were heard. Safvet explained that they announced the promulgation of a Constitution, which would inaugurate a new era. Once more the Turks had had recourse to their stock counter-blast to Emancipation—a high-sounding measure of Reform.

Further sittings were held, and no progress was made in bringing the Turks to consent to surrender any part of their sovereignty. They stood out for their independence.

On January 12th (1877), the representatives of the six Powers decided that the "irreducible minimum" should be still further reduced to a "mitigated resumé," in which, however, the principle of foreign supervision was retained.

Meanwhile, Lord Salisbury had made himself the mouthpiece of several of the "violet" notions. Thus, in a despatch of January 4th,[1] he lays it down that the independence of the Porte must be interpreted so as to be consistent with the conjoint military and diplomatic action taken in recent years by the signatory Powers, and combats the idea that the grant of practical self-government to the Bulgarian provinces would favour the assumed designs of Russia. And again he maintained in the Conference[2] that the engagements of the Treaty of Paris were not and could not be unilateral.

At the meeting of January 20th, it became evident that the Turks were as profuse as ever in their counter proposals of reform, and as far as ever from conceding the demands of the Powers. Lord Salisbury observed that the task of the Conference was

> to establish administrative autonomy and effective guarantees against bad administration in the revolted provinces. As soon as a refusal to grant such guarantees had been duly recorded, its mission is completed, and its existence can no longer be prolonged. —*Ninth Protocol.*

A final meeting was held at the Austrian Embassy on the evening of January 21st, but the Turkish Plenipotentiaries did not come. The next day Lord Salisbury left Constantinople, and Sir Henry Elliot followed shortly afterwards.

[1] *Turkey*, ii. 1877, No. 167.
[2] Sitting of Jan. 15th, eighth protocol.

§ 4. *Attitude of the Philo-Turkish Press.*

But while Lord Salisbury was thus maintaining at Constantinople up to the last moment language appropriate to a determination to insist on a limitation of the Turkish power, some of the professed supporters of the Government at home were by no means prepared to acquiesce contentedly in such a policy. According to their views, Turkey was to be advised and encouraged to reform herself. Russia was to be deprived of any plausible pretext for coercing her. A "golden bridge" was to be built to enable the Czar to retire from the position he had assumed in the Moscow speech. Every concession to Turkey was a gain. Any approach by Lord Salisbury to insistence on emancipation was a violation of the spirit of his instructions.

> The *Daily News* alludes to the explosion of anti-Russian enthusiasm which salutes one's ears morning and evening long after the order "cease firing" has passed along what used to be the well-disciplined lines of the Conservative party.—(Dec. 14th.)
>
> It remarks again that the supporters of the Government do not take Lord Carnarvon's view of Lord Salisbury's mission, but talk as if the only object of sending him to Constantinople was to oppose Russia.—(Dec. 20th.)

> British generosity is taking the right view respecting the bold and skilful policy of the Ottoman Government. . . . There can be no sort of denial that the promulgation of this liberal Constitution has transformed the whole situation. It will not now do for the Russian Envoy, or any other, to pretend that a *fait accompli* so vast and fearless can be set aside, or compared disparagingly with former Hattis and Iradés. . . . "Assistance," therefore—and no longer "coercion," occupation, or any other vindictive phrase—is the right word for the Powers now to use; and the Czar will show himself the true champion of the Christians by leading the way in a generous recognition of the altered circumstances.—*D. T.* Dec. 26th.

> Since the Emperor has solemnly protested that he has no object except the good of the Christians, it is clear that he would forfeit his pledge by forcing upon Bulgaria a sanguinary war, instead of allowing her to try Midhat's large and liberal reforms, under a Commission and a chosen guard. . . . By that daring and wise proclamation of a re-created Islam, Midhat Pasha has transformed the position of the Porte. We are concerned no longer with merely a mountainous corner of Europe, but rather with the three hundred millions of Mahometans upon the globe, whose education and amelioration now depend upon the concert of

the Powers. To have proposed and promulgated such a scheme—apart from its future working—settles the respective places of Russia and Turkey as civilising Powers.—*D. T.* Jan. 7th, 1877.

"Autonomy," "tributary States," "expulsion of unspeakable Turks," "armed occupation"—such were the phrases current in October and November last; but while these have dwindled down to the "nine points" which a day or two ago were General Ignatieff's "irreducible minimum," we now behold the points contracted to six and gladly submitted for debate, while the Conference continues upon a basis implying the approaching collapse of Russian combinations and the virtual triumph of the self-reliance and resolution of the Ottomans. . . . We confess we were not prepared to hear of terms so humiliating as General Ignatieff has in this programme persuaded his colleagues to entertain. . . . —We have said enough to explain our amazement at such proposals. We should shame the general sense of justice and manliness in this country if we expected the English public to wonder any longer that the Turks put such demands on one side in polite silence. No nation with a spark of national life left in its midst could possibly accept terms so fatal. It would be difficult to render them more destructive to the independence and integrity of the Empire if they were dictated by a conqueror openly bent on the annihilation of a vanquished Throne. How, then, it may be asked, has Lord Salisbury even temporarily accepted them? . . . . Two motives have naturally influenced our Envoy—the first to obtain what we all desire, a peaceable settlement, and the next to leave room for that inevitable bargaining which accompanies all transactions, diplomatic and commercial, in the leisurely East. . . . But it has been a most useful experiment meanwhile thus to let our Bulgarian agitators see for themselves how little their wild plans were possible. The tenth part of them, ten times divided and scheduled into these remarkable propositions, has turned out to be something which Turkey repudiates with grave and stern silence, and which Russia is obliged to forego, after declaring them "irreducible." Shall we hear after this any more nonsense spoken in public about "change of policy"—any more childish talk about "guiding the action of the Government into the path of national opinion"? What has happened is that a mere fractional portion of the plan for the Sultan's humiliation is now found impracticable. The thing which alone disappears "bag and baggage" from these provinces is the idle hope of dismembering the Ottoman Empire before it was dead; and those who asseverated that "Russia could not retreat," as well as those who were so certain that the moribund Osmanli "would surrender everything if he was only pressed," have discovered to their wonder to-day that there are still "some Turks in Turkey." Now, therefore, the best course to obtain peace is manifest. "Cordial co-operation" has been tried as far as was decorous, and turns out a failure, so that the last chance of settlement lies in that reasonable and kindly policy towards which Lord Salisbury's reservations always pointed.

Russian diplomacy has led hitherto; it must henceforth follow. . . . No Power with as much vitality as the Ottoman Empire has evinced can be justly called upon to accept suicidal reforms, especially when its own are larger and wider; and from this time forward Lord Salisbury, we are sure, will avoid every further entanglement with Russian designs, but aim at the perfectly possible issue of a bond between Turkey and the Powers, the first engaging to carry out the reforms faithfully, the last insuring protection to her while she does this.—*D. T.* Jan. 6th.

What was alone gained last Thursday appears to be that the inadmissibility of the Russian conditions has been logically explained, and the firm resolution of Turkey to reject them, even at the cost of war, categorically declared.—*D. T.* Jan. 8th.

"That impetuous statesman" [Lord Salisbury], says an alarmed contemporary, "has attempted to revive the strong language of Stratford Canning to enforce a policy which Mr. Gladstone would approve." We hope so. . . . The professed friends of the Government show in this respect less power of adapting themselves to the course of events than is professed by the Ministers whom they so much admire. To be more Turkish than Lord Beaconsfield may seem an almost unattainable gift, but it really appears as though some politicians would achieve this apparent impossibility before they have done.—*D. N.* Jan. 6th.

The *Spectator* notes that the Turkish party in England are evidently preparing for an attack on Lord Salisbury. The *Morning Post*, for example, of Tuesday took the greatest pains to undermine his reputation as a diplomatist, and to prepare its readers to find that he had not only been made a tool of by General Ignatieff, but induced to squander the influence of England on impossible enterprises, which even if possible, would have been disadvantageous to the true interests of the Empire.—(Jan. 13th.)

It is said that the poor Turks cannot believe that the judgment of England is deliberately thrown into the balance against them in their present difficulties. It is true that Lord Salisbury expresses his opinion without reserve and with an emphasis that cannot be mistaken, but there remains a lingering doubt whether this Plenipotentiary really speaks the mind of his principals. . . . Is not Lord Beaconsfield still at the head of affairs? Is not Lord Derby still the Foreign Secretary? Lord Salisbury may come and say his say and be vehement as he lists; but the English Government is the same as it was, and its policy must be unchanged. There is a real difficulty in dispelling this delusion, and we cannot be quite satisfied up to the last that words will get rid of it. It is unfortunate, since it must, somehow or other, be scattered. Meanwhile, Russian reinforcements continue to arrive in Bessarabia.—*T.* Jan. 13th.

The language of the English journals which affect to speak the sentiments of the Government is expressly designed to foster this illusion, if it be one; and to lead to the belief that Lord Salisbury is the dupe of his own impetuous convictions, if not of some less impetuous colleagues who have despatched him on a fool's errand. Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby cannot be ignorant of the hindrance thrown in the way of the Special Ambassador at Constantinople by the language of journals which, being subject to their control, are supposed to speak their minds. When newspapers which are the sycophants and flatterers of each successive Administration, which court every Minister as he rises and spurn him as he falls, encourage Turkey to resistance, they are inevitably believed in Constantinople to write as they are prompted. Lord Salisbury, as the telegram of our Special Correspondent vouches, has both felt and declared the difficulties thrown in his way by journals of this sort, which, when they are not the "kept" organs of a Minister, are the street-walkers and common prostitutes of public opinion.—*D. N.* Jan. 13th.

The *Daily Telegraph* took upon itself to expound

Lord Salisbury's real purpose in Constantinople. We explained that the British Plenipotentiary—in thorough accord with the Cabinet, and always consistently labouring towards the object of his commission—had throughout faithfully striven to bring the originally inadmissible demands of Russia down to that peaceable level where they could be accepted by Turkey without derogating from her national safety and imperial rights; but always so as to ensure true reformations and better administration for her people, and particularly for her Christian subjects.—*D. T.* Jan. 15th.

Two days earlier the *Daily Telegraph* had argued that it would be absurd for Russia to think of fighting for the irreducible minimum now alone surviving.—(Jan. 13th.)

Lord Salisbury's efforts have eliminated from the Russian demands whatever was large enough to make war plausible or defensible; and there remains no *casus belli* except the Moscow speech; while to shed rivers of human blood because a Czar had spoken rashly would indeed be a dreadful sort of piety.—(Jan. 22nd.)

§ 5. *Real Attitude of the Government.*

The interpretation which the *Daily Telegraph* was putting on Lord Salisbury's mission, an interpretation in which the Emancipation Policy had altogether dropped out, corresponded a great deal more nearly to the actual position of the Government than the public for a long time were at all willing to believe.

A decision had been arrived at in a Cabinet Council of December 22nd, which brought the Government back almost

exactly to the point at which they stood after the critical Cabinet Council of October 4th,[1] when they determined to reject the Russian proposals for occupation, or coercion by the combined fleets—as means for enforcing the "English Terms."

Lord Salisbury was informed of the determination of the Government in the following words :—

> Her Majesty's Government have decided that England will not assent to, or assist in, coercive measures, military or naval, against the Porte.
>
> The Porte must, on the other hand, be made to understand, as it has from the first been informed, that it can expect no assistance from England in the event of war.—*Derby to Salisbury*, Dec. 22nd.[2]

§ 6. *Bewildered Pause of Public Opinion.*

It was some time before this very critical resolve was fully appreciated at home. People were a good deal puzzled as to the exact attitude of the English Ministry.

As the solution proposed by the Powers was mitigated, to meet the objections of Turkey, until the measure of emancipation it contained was attenuated almost out of sight, some began to think it would be better for the Conference to fail than for a settlement to be patched up on such a hollow and unsatisfactory basis.

> Now the chief thing we have to fear is that Russia will go too far in the path of concession.—*Mr. Fawcett at Hackney*, Jan. 9th.

Thus it was not without a sense of relief that many heard of the final refusal of the Porte to agree to the terms of the "mitigated *resumé*" and that the ambassadors had left Constantinople. They could not believe that the incident would be allowed to have this lame and impotent conclusion. They could not believe but that in a few days some further step would be taken by the English Government to bring about the state of things which that Government had declared to be necessary. On the other hand,

[1] *Ante*, p. 69.

[2] *Turkey*, ii. 1877, No. 78. Compare No. 76 to Lord Lyons (Dec. 21st) speaking of the Cabinet Council to be held the next day.

The Duke of Argyll notes that "there is good reason to believe that the Turks were duly informed of the resolution of the Government" (vol. i. p. 316).

Much of the subsequent Parliamentary criticism of the Government was occupied with this point.

the disposition to lose sight of the wrongs of the Provincials, and to deprecate any breach of the peace reappears. This tendency of opinion now finds expression in the *Times*.

However, the time was close at hand when Ministers would be called upon to give an account in the constitutional way of what they had done in the past, and what they intended in the future. Meanwhile curiosity was excited as to the probable attitude of parties and of individual statesmen towards the all-absorbing question.

> Now that honourable members, in anticipation of the coming Session, are beginning afresh to address their constituents, the line which the Liberal Party may adopt in Parliament becomes a matter of the highest importance. Already sufficiently cut up into sections, by circumstances independent of leadership, the nominal followers of Lord Hartington cannot, save at the expense of further division, take their stand on questions the advocacy of which would divorce them from the nation. Should they do so their position would be somewhat analogous to that of Fox, Grey, and Sheridan, at the close of the eighteenth century, and they would force a large number of sober-minded Liberals, whose sincere convictions on domestic subjects would suffer no diminution, to back up those statesmen who, when vast Imperial interests are at stake, uphold, above all things, the maintenance of the Empire in its unimpaired integrity and strength. . . . What we cannot comprehend is a policy which would seek success in a path certain to alienate public sympathy, and which might be expressed in the phrase, "Better the Russians in Constantinople than another year of Tory Government." We should be sorry to believe that the sagacious leaders of the Liberal Party would wreck its fortunes on a basis at once unsound as politics and bad as strategy. Yet recent platform harangues have been tuned in a key which must give rise to suspicions that an attempt at least will be made, as in August last, to use the promotion of Russian interests as a stepping-stone to office. . . . To our comprehension, the course marked out for the Opposition is broad, simple, and statesmanlike. They are bound, equally by education and convictions, to perform the function which has fallen under their charge, but not at the cost of the Empire, not for the behoof of a foreign Power. . . . If, then, the Liberal chiefs would not break with the nation, they must subordinate party action in foreign politics to Imperial safety. They must draw a sharp line between the practice of Opposition in internal and external affairs. The ground on which they take their stand must be coincident with that of the Empire, and not be confined to a little patch of Eastern territory.—*D. T.* Jan. 11th.

> The most just, the most politic, and we may say the most truly dignified course would be to recognise that the conditions

have changed since the commotions of the autumn, and even since the Moscow speech was uttered. The Powers have shown their willingness to act with Russia, and they have in concert with her agreed upon principles for the administration of the disturbed Provinces which are valuable even apart from the element of foreign intervention. Russia may well wait with the others and watch what the effect of all this will be.—*T.* Jan. 20th.

Mr. Gladstone told the Liberals of Frome[1] that "the people of England will wait with intense anxiety to know what is to happen." In a certain sense this is true, though the language of the speaker may be a little overstrained. . . . The prices of speculative stocks are higher now than they were before the Conference began its sittings, so that its failure has in truth produced no agitation at all. There is, in fact, greater serenity than there was before. If we turn our attention to the conduct of our numerous voluntary political associations, we must end by confessing that there also the tokens of intense anxiety are few. It may be that they are waiting in silence, with feelings no less deep because expression of them is suppressed, but there are usually found some ardent and impulsive men whose zeal cannot be kept under restraint, and where are they now? We ask these questions with no desire to rejoice in the apathy of the people, but simply that we may not deceive ourselves in our judgment of the popular temper. . . . It is at such times that unofficial and irresponsible persons—men who are neither in office nor within the range of those who may soon be called to office—are able to speak out boldly what they think, and thus render the Government of the day the service of discovering what is or what is not the feeling of the nation? Is it not so now? The Government stands at the meeting of the ways. They may without inconsistency declare that their active policy has been exhausted by the failure of the Conference, or its attempt to conciliate cannot be left without a sequel. Each course is open to them, and before they decide upon either the one or the other they must ascertain what other Powers think and what Lord Salisbury reports. They must ascertain yet a third thing—what are the mind and temper of the people of England, and the statesman who helps to reveal this does a service to the Government and the people. Mr. Gladstone had an opportunity of doing this yesterday, and he neglected it.—*T.* Jan. 23rd.

A few days later, the *Times* is quite certain

> that the Czar's Government never expected that England and the other Powers would join in coercing the Porte. If we are told of the logical consequences of our action, we can only reply that we do not recognise logical consequences.—(Feb. 3rd.)

[1] *Post*, p. 146.

The *Pall Mall Gazette*, in an article entitled "The New War Party," says:—

> When the controversy began, Mr. Gladstone's followers courted the alliance of the peace at any price party, but now their language can have but one meaning. They are desirous that the fleets and armies of this country should be employed, with or without the assistance of Russia, for the purpose of expelling the Turks from Europe.—(Feb. 2nd.)

> In her eagerness to conciliate England, Russia has whittled away many of the hopes of the Christian provinces. She has suffered the reform she demanded to be reduced to a minimum below which it would be inappreciable.—*Spec.* Dec. 30th.

> The usual data for the formation of an opinion are absent. No one knows exactly the line which the Government will take in defending itself, the objects it will avow, or even the sympathies it will as a body display. . . . [The *Spectator* alludes to what seems to it the] unwise course which Mr. Gladstone adopted on Monday.[1] He apparently thought it unadvisable with the meeting of Parliament so near to state the policy he would recommend, yet could not refrain from touching the subject. . . . The effect of such a speech—probably the unjust effect—is to produce in the public an impression of half-heartedness and hesitation, not diminished by the almost entire reticence of Mr. Gladstone's friends. The leaders of Opposition have studiously refrained from giving any hint of what they think ought to be done, now that Europe has retreated discredited before Turkey. . . . We have not lost all hope that Parliament may prove more "sentimental" than men like Mr. Lowther or the Mahometan journalists of London yet imagine. . . . It is of course, more probable, especially if the Liberal Chiefs hesitate, and talk about duties which fall on United Europe, and not on individual members of the family, that the House of Commons may be half-hearted, may submit to the delay in the production of papers with which the Foreign Office will try to wear out the time of action—for after Russia has moved, action by her side will be difficult—and may content itself with cheering a few angry, but infructuous speeches.—*Spec.* Jan. 27th.

§ 7. *Enthusiasm for Mr. Gladstone.*

The *Times*, as we have seen,[2] was disposed to regard the pause which supervened between the failure of the Conference and the meeting of Parliament as an indication that Public Opinion was no longer keenly interested in the success of the "violet" policy;

[1] Referring to his speech at Frome, *post* p. 146.
[2] Jan. 23rd, *ante*, p. 144.

but a significant indication to the contrary is afforded by a visit which Mr. Gladstone happened to pay to the West of England during the interval.

The occasion was seized upon with eagerness at various places through which he happened to pass to express enthusiasm for him. The newspaper accounts indicate that the demonstrations were of a spontaneous character, and they appear to have been improvised upon the spur of the moment. A year before Mr. Gladstone's presence would not have provoked any manifestations of the kind, though since that time they have been the rule, rather than the exception, whenever opportunity has offered.

His way from Longleat House, where he had been visiting the Marquis of Bath, to visit the Bishop of Bath and Wells lay through Frome.

> The right hon. gentleman having consented to receive a deputation and an address from the Frome Liberal Association at the railway station, an immense concourse, numbering at least 5,000 persons, assembled to do him honour, and accorded him a most enthusiastic reception.—*T.* Jan. 23rd.

In reply, Mr. Gladstone spoke upon the question of our treaty responsibilities. A week later he travelled from Dunster to Glastonbury. At the Taunton station he was met by a large assemblage, and while waiting for the train, he made another speech of some importance on the subject of the treaties.[1]

At the village of Street, through which he drove on his way to Glastonbury,

> large banners were prepared with the mottoes, "Street bids you welcome," "Freedom for Bulgaria," "Let us not be weary in well doing," and in spite of the rain several hundreds marched to Glastonbury, headed by the Street Templar Band, which had volunteered its services. Many people from Glastonbury assembled also, and when Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone entered the carriage in waiting for them they were greeted with tremendous cheering. Notwithstanding rain and mud, the whole concourse formed in procession and escorted the carriage nearly a mile through the town. Opposite St. John's Church, Mr. Gladstone alighted and addressed the crowd. . . . The clergy of the town refused to allow the bells of either church to be rung.—*D. N.* Jan. 29th.

How is this enthusiasm to be accounted for? Mr. Gladstone at this time was not one of the official leaders of the Liberal

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 128.

Party. At Frome, he said his aspiration was to serve in the rank and file.

The truth seems to be that he was regarded as the impersonation of the "violet" policy. He was the man, who, more than any other, had brought to bear upon the Government the force of Public Opinion;—that force which, it seemed, had turned the Government from the detested pro-Turkish policy and sent Lord Salisbury to Constantinople. He was the man, to whom, more than any other, now that Lord Salisbury had returned empty-handed, Public Opinion was looking to see to it in Parliament that the Government did not turn back upon their steps.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PARLIAMENTARY PERIOD.

§ 1. *Characteristics of the Period.*

THE break up of the Constantinople Conference, with the refusal of the Porte to accede to the final propositions of the European Powers, rendered a new departure necessary and marks the end of another act of the diplomatic drama. Inquiry was immediately made by Russia as to the intentions of the other Powers.

> The refusal opposed by the Porte to the wishes of Europe involves the Eastern crisis in a new phase. The Imperial Cabinet has from the outset considered this question as an European one, which should not and cannot be solved but by the unanimous agreement of the Great Powers. . . . [The Powers arrived in the Conference] at a complete understanding, both as to the conditions of peace and as to the reforms to be introduced. The result was communicated to the Porte as the fixed and unanimous wish of Europe, and met with an obstinate refusal. . . . It is necessary for us to know what the Cabinets with whom we have hitherto acted in common propose to do with a view of meeting this refusal and insuring the execution of their wishes.—*Gortschakoff.*[1]

> The Russian circular has been published before its delivery into the hands of Lord Derby, in order to stimulate those among us who have done their utmost to assist Prince Gortschakoff in his Eastern campaign. It is intended to test the strength of his friends in the British Parliament.—*D. T.* Feb. 7th.

As if by way of counter-blast, on February 8th the Turkish ambassador communicated to Lord Derby a long despatch from Safvet[2] protesting that the programme which the European delegates had drawn up in concert among themselves failed to confine

[1] Circular communicated to Lord Derby, Feb. 5th. *Turkey*, viii. 1877, No. 1.
[2] *Turkey*, xv. 1877, No. 81.

its object within the limits laid down by the English programme, and to conform to the stipulations of the Treaty of Paris.

Meanwhile Midhat Pasha was suddenly arrested, and shortly afterwards he was banished from the Turkish dominions. Edhem Pasha, previously Foreign Minister, became Grand Vizier in his stead.

> *Mr. E. A. Freeman* notes that at the moment when the Russian circular gives Europe another opportunity comes the news of the fall of Midhat. The friends of the Turk are already trying to make capital out of his fall, as they tried to make it out of his elevation. The Sultan, we are told, is more busily engaged in the work of reform than Midhat himself could have been.—*Letter in T.* Feb. 10th.

On the eve of the session the leaders of the Opposition met at Lord Granville's house. They appear to have agreed to support the Emancipation Policy,[1] but there was no desire to raise a general discussion on the whole past policy of the Government in the debate on the Address. The attitude of the Opposition was an expectant one. They waited to see how the Government would develop the policy on which, as it seemed, they had embarked.

Parliament met on Thursday, February 8th. An enormous mass of papers was issued,[2] which by their very voluminousness tended rather to obscure than to elucidate the position of the Government, especially as the papers extended over a period in which very important changes in their attitude had taken place.

Thus the Parliamentary period opens with Public Opinion in doubt as to the ultimate policy of the Cabinet face to face with a recalcitrant Turkey; but hardly in doubt that by the action of Parliament all uncertainty on this point would speedily be cleared up, and doubting least of all that if the policy of Ministers should not prove to be in accordance with Public Opinion, Public Opinion would find adequate and effective expression in Parliament.

Both these expectations were disappointed. By degrees it became manifest that Ministers had given up, if they had ever entertained, all intention of compelling the Porte to consent to Lord Salisbury's demands, and had fallen back on Lord Derby's policy of deprecating any breach of the peace. On the other hand the official Opposition did not identify itself boldly with the Emancipation Policy.

Told shortly the story of the period is this. The "violet"

[1] Compare *D. N.* of May 5th, *post*, § 5.
[2] Comprised in the bulky Blue Books *Turkey*, i. and ii. 1877.

section of Opinion, which during the Conference period had been watching the gradual cutting down of the measures of emancipation demanded from the Porte till at last it experienced almost a sensation of relief on learning that the Conference had failed, was now enjoying full use of the organ on which it had been relying to brace the diplomacy of this country up to the requirements of the situation. But it very soon became manifest that during the ensuing act of the diplomatic drama, English diplomacy was directed to nothing but to dissuade Russia from coercing Turkey. At the same time Parliament strangely failed to give effect to the "violet" current of opinion which set strongly out of doors. English diplomacy failed. The Order policy broke down and the Russian war commenced. At home ominous signs were not wanting of a desire in many quarters to convert an Order policy into a policy of active support of Turkey. Then a second agitation arose out of doors, which marks the sense of Public Opinion of the failure of its parliamentary organ to give it adequate expression. At the same time Mr. Gladstone, the great representative in Parliament of the great stream of "violet" opinion, acting independently and with but scanty support from the official leaders of the Opposition, attempted to move Parliament. But the "violet" policy, both in the House and out of doors, was weakened at this crisis by the defection of many of the "Peace party," who, in the autumn, had thrown all their weight into that scale. The agitation, so far as it was a protest against the "red" policy, succeeded; so far as it was a demand for a "violet" policy, the agitation failed.

The period ends with the five nights' debate on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, which drew from Mr. Cross, on the part of the Government, a declaration of a new policy, which was accepted on all hands, though from very different motives, as a policy which must be acquiesced in, having regard to the circumstances of the time.

Repudiating alike the policies of "Emancipation" and of "Support," Mr. Cross pronounced for "Isolation," in other words, for neutrality, so long as certain specified British interests were not affected; and with this declaration on the part of the Government the second agitation came to an end. The opportunity for saving Europe from a great war by adopting the "violet" policy had gone by. Nothing remained, for the present, to the "violet" section of Public Opinion, but to watch narrowly lest under colour of protecting British interests the policy of neutrality might give place to one of supporting Turkey.

§ 2. *The Parliamentary Discussions.*

a. The Debates on the Address.—When Parliament met on Thursday, Feb. 8th,[1] the recent negotiations formed the all-absorbing topic in the debates on the Address in both Houses, but it did not at once become clear that the Government had no intention of taking any steps to enforce compliance by Turkey with the demands which had been made. Still, the ministerial speeches indicated a tendency to fall away from the position which it was thought the Government had assumed when Lord Salisbury was sent to Constantinople. Lord Derby's and Lord Granville's references to the treaties have already been quoted.[2] Referring to Lord Salisbury's mission,

> the *Duke of Argyll* said: He knew no case in the course of his public life where all parties had hailed, as in this, an appointment with such satisfaction. Lord Derby's speech of Sept. 11th[3] had marked an absolute change in the policy of the Government, as direct, as sudden, and as complete as if there had been a change of Government. This change was no discredit or disgrace to the Government; but if that language had been held at the close o last session there would have been no agitation, and no censure would have been passed upon the Government. With respect to the speech of the noble earl the Secretary for Foreign Affairs today, I interpret it as a distinct step backwards by the Government from their engagements. In the first place, I deeply deplore the expression of my noble friend that he regrets that the Turkish Government had not succeeded in suppressing the insurrection in the Herzegovina and Bosnia. . . . I say distinctly in this place—on this housetop of Europe—that every insurrection against that Government is a legitimate insurrection. Human beings under that Government owe it no allegiance. I heard with infinite regret the declaration of the noble earl that he was determined in no case to use force. I do not know whether that announcement was made before, but, if it was, you might as well not have sent an envoy to Constantinople. . . . The noble earl the Secretary

[1] The following lines refer to Sir Stafford Northcote's taking the leadership of the House of Commons in place of Lord Beaconsfield:—

Then to car Phaëton sprang with a lightness that scarce had been looked for,
Settled himself in his place, and rejoicing to handle the ribbons,
Flung his adieux from the car to Phœbus, adviser paternal;
While the swift steeds, that had wont to be worked by that cunning old driver,
Banter and *Bunkum* the leaders, and *Mystery* Asian descended,
Coupled with *Management* (dark horses both), best-bitted of wheelers,
Filled the wide air with their neighings and pawed with their hoofs at the draw-bar.
—*Punch*, Feb. 10th, 1877.

[2] *Ante*, vol. i. pp. 123 and 129.

[3] *Ante*, p. 8.

for Foreign Affairs has said that our plain course was to do nothing—to let things drift. The noble earl who moved the Address said it was very wrong to speak to the man at the helm. There is no man at the helm. . . . If some one does not seize the helm which he tells us he has abandoned, Europe will drift into a bloody and a dreadful war.

Lord Salisbury said no threat, or intimation of threat or coercion should ever be made by a British Government until it is prepared to follow up its menaces. It is very easy to speak of "threatening coercion," but have you picked the idea to pieces in your own mind?—*H. of L.* Feb. 8th.

In the House of Commons

the *Marquis of Hartington* said: On Sept. 21st the Government departed finally from the policy of non-intervention, and committed itself to two distinct acts of intervention.[1] In the first place, on Sept. 21st, Lord Derby wrote a despatch which was practically the answer of the Government to the demand which had been addressed to them in hundreds of meetings throughout the country. I think that when the right honourable gentlemen made use of these expressions, they undertook not merely to ask for reforms, but to obtain reforms. They must obtain them, because nothing can be more contrary to the interests of England than that Russia and Turkey should be left face to face. Can anything be more contrary to the interests of England, than that Russia should be permitted, if not compelled, to take upon herself a duty which is logically cast upon the whole of the Powers? . . . . . There are some among us—I trust that the Government do not belong to the number—who look with calmness, if not with satisfaction, at the prospect of leaving Turkey and Russia face to face, and the prospect of war breaking out between them. . . . . [Is not the danger of that position increased] since the time when Mr. Canning, rather than encounter the perils of such a situation, rather than allow Russia to take upon herself singly the task of enforcing the proposals which had been agreed upon between England and Russia as to the affairs of Greece, was willing even to go the length of proposing to cooperate with Russia for the purpose of attaining the end in view?

Sir S. Northcote:—I acknowledge that we do stand in a different position with reference to the Christians in Turkey than to those in some other countries. . . . But how difficult a matter must intervention necessarily be! Some years ago almost everybody in this House would have sprung to his feet and proclaimed that the doctrine of England was non-intervention. . . . .One or two lines we have laid down; we are not prepared to have recourse to coercion.

[1] Viz., the demand for punishment, and the promulgation of the "English terms," *ante*, p. 60.

Mr. Gladstone:—"There has been no change of policy, but never mind." . . . He recognised certain great facts in the policy of the Government for which he formerly looked in vain. When Sir Stafford Northcote said he was not prepared to resort to coercion he left it a little ambiguous whether he meant on the part of England alone, or whether he meant common, as well as separate, coercion.—*H. of C.* Feb. 8th.

The newspaper comments show the lingering belief in the reality of the conversion mixed with rising doubt, and a recognition of the tendency in the Government to swing back towards their old policy.

The *Daily News* said: Two policies are now fairly before the country. If the country is in earnest, it can, we believe, insure the adoption by the Government of whichever of the two it prefers. Sir Stafford Northcote's speech revealed unexpected points of agreement between the Opposition and the Cabinet. We part company with him only at this point: that whereas he prefaces his remarks about the necessity and benefit of common intervention with the declaration that the Government "are not prepared to have recourse to coercion," we frankly say that now that the Turks have refused to grant these indispensable guarantees we do not see how they are to be extorted from them except by coercion. Lord Derby's answer, however, was in almost every way unsatisfactory.—(Feb. 10th.)

Whatever resolution may be submitted to the House of Commons as the basis of the coming discussion, it should invite Government to adhere to their present policy.—(Feb. 12th.)

The speeches delivered on the first night of the Session by Lord Granville and Lord Hartington on one side, and by Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Beaconsfield himself on the other, show that the Government is gradually coming round to the view of Eastern policy long vainly contended for by the Opposition. . . . The utterances of the Government on the first night of the Session, if a little faltering on the lips of Lord Derby, have been sufficiently unmistakable in the mouths of Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Salisbury to bring the case under the ordinary rule which bids an Opposition do nothing that can embarrass the conduct of foreign policy, provided that the drift of this policy is substantially in the right direction.—*D. N.* Feb. 14th.

The leaders of the Opposition insist that we cannot rest in the situation to which we have been brought. . . . Lord Granville is confident that if all the Powers in Europe made it plain to the Porte that they were agreed to use force, their proposals would be adopted without its actual employment. The Government, on the other hand, refuse to assent to these counsels, and propose to remain where we are, at any rate for the present. They do not

say that in no circumstances will they consent to use force. The Duke of Argyll tried to fasten this upon Lord Derby, and, indeed, the Foreign Secretary did use words which justified the Duke's attempt; but Lord Beaconsfield, and still more strongly Lord Salisbury, repudiated the imputation that they had rashly consented to a universal pledge to bind them through a changing future. They would go no further than this, that in the present circumstances they rejected the idea of co-operating with the other Powers in compelling the acceptance of the proposals upon which all were agreed. We must accept this as the real attitude of the Ministry. . . . The issue between the Ministry and the Opposition now is that whereas the former are not prepared to sanction the suggestion of coercion, the latter are prepared for it. . . . Each leader, of course, assumed that he had the nation at his back, and Mr. Gladstone challenged the Ministry to imitate his example three years since, expecting, as Mr. Hardy suggested, that a similar result would follow. It is evident that all estimates of the balance of judgment of chance combinations of voters must be extremely hypothetical, and nothing can be alleged with certainty except that each man is disposed to believe that the truth is what he wishes it to be. Jealousy of Russia was a powerful force among us, and has certainly not become extinct. At the same time it must be remembered that this feeling of jealousy may tell both ways. . . . The Ministry, have, however, a better and a stronger feeling than jealousy of Russia working on their side. A wholesome horror of war, and a dread of putting ourselves in any position that may expose us to a risk of being drawn into a war, are sentiments of great power among the people. . . . It seems probable that the working classes would support the policy recommended by the Opposition. . . . Manufacturers and merchants, on the other hand, view all suggestions of force with undisguised aversion.—*T.* Feb. 10th.

One thing is certain, that the House of Commons, at least, will not endure for another session the reticence and mystery of the last, or acquiesce submissively in the demand that the Government shall be implicitly trusted.—*T.* Feb. 10th.

What we conceive to be clear is that the policy of Lord Derby —the earlier policy of Lord Derby—has conquered, and that there is a well marked recession from his energetic language of the autumn . . . . . towards the cold indifference of spring and summer. The policy of *laissez faire* is for the moment in the ascendant, and so far as it is qualified at all . . . . . it is qualified in the direction of Mr. Disraeli, rather than in the direction of the Liberals.—*Spec.* Feb. 10th.

The chiefs of the Liberal party hope that Europe may yet be persuaded to make the Conference executive as Russia has requested, and, failing that, wish themselves to assist Russia to make it executive, thus binding Russia to consider Europe and not her own advantage. That is, we believe, the ultimate policy

of the Liberal party. Lord Granville, an experienced diplomatist, did not go quite so far. He did not make any allusion to the possibility that we might be compelled to ally ourselves with Russia singly, for he declined to doubt that the European accord could be maintained or that when this was once perceived Turkey would venture to resist. . . . . We do not believe that Europe, as a body, will move one step, but that does not matter. It is necessary during the month of bad weather which remains to us to exhaust that possibility, and then the next step must be either the one hinted at by Lord Hartington [1] or the far bolder and more righteous one which has been hinted at by the Duke of Argyll, to do the work ourselves with the assistance of the oppressed. The former is the more practicable alternative, and it is that which the Liberal party, backed we trust, by the people of England, intend to support.—*Spec.* Feb. 10th.

The *Daily Telegraph* earnestly advises the Opposition to get rid of the unlucky policy put forward experimentally by the Liberal leaders. It notes that Lords Granville and Hartington did not commit themselves irrevocably. The Liberal Party may be wise in time.—(Feb. 19th.)

[It speaks again of the fatal policy of coercing the Porte in concert with Russia. Is this policy going to find expression in the political proceedings of the Opposition? It believes that the present Cabinet as it stands will never yield to such a proposal.] What we have had mainly to busy ourselves with during the troubled months of the past year has been the general policy of the Government, the conduct of England, and the designs which have been set in motion to subvert existing territorial arrangements to the disadvantage of this nation. To that line of action we shall remain steadfast without respect to parties; nor shall we fail to oppose alike those who cry "Perish India," and those whose watchword is "Better the Russians in Constantinople than another year of Tory rule."—*D. T.* Feb. 13th.

In a very few days it became clear that the Government entertained no intention of coercing Turkey into agreeing to their proposals, if indeed they were not fast swinging back into that attitude of objection and hostility to the bringing to bear upon Turkey of any pressure whatever, an attitude which would ultimately result in an anti-Russian and pro-Turkish policy on the part of England, in the event of Russia's persisting in pressing for the emancipation of the Provincials.

b. The Guerilla Warfare.—This "swing back" on the part of Ministers had its counterpart in the attitude of the official leaders of the Opposition. Challenged by Lord Salisbury to "pick the idea of coercion to pieces," they avoided coming to close quarters with the

[1] Alluding to Lord Hartington's reference to Canning, *ante*, p. 152, which the *Spectator* had quoted.

question as to what was to be done if their belief in the amenability of the Porte to pressure should prove erroneous. Thus as between official parties attack and defence passed each other. To the question —"Do you wish to purchase the adoption of your solution at the cost of an English war if necessary?"—the Opposition leaders would only answer, "It is to be had on better terms; the mere threat will suffice, and it is the only way to prevent an actual Russian war." Instead of distinctly formulating the "violet" policy and challenging the Government to accept or repudiate it, the Opposition began to engage in a guerilla warfare of questions and criticisms founded on the Blue Books. The Government, while deprecating a general debate on the ground that negotiations were still on foot, maintained strenuously that their policy had not undergone any change, and referred all inquirers to the Blue Books as containing the completest exposition of what that policy was. Yet how could those policies be the same which dictated the language of Lord Salisbury at Constantinople and the language of Lord Derby before the agitation, to say nothing of the Premier's speeches at Aylesbury and at the Guildhall?

These tactics no doubt were founded on the constitutional doctrine of joint ministerial responsibility, and the assumption that the Cabinet must either accept any policy fairly to be deduced from the language of any member of their body, or else repudiate the spokesman.[1] At first, probably the desire to draw from the Government a definite statement of the actual attitude which they intended to adopt predominated; but when the Government resented, as resent they did, every attempt of this kind, no doubt the desire came in to discredit them by convicting them of that inconsistency which they so strenuously denied.

It was apparently supposed that Ministers could sooner or later be driven by tactics of this kind into a logical dilemma whence escape with credit would be impossible. However, nothing of the kind happened. Verbal references to the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire were appealed to, as conclusive evidence that in despatching Lord Salisbury, they had not infringed on the rights of the Porte as an independent Power, or on the maxim of non-intervention.

[1] Compare the advice on parliamentary tactics given by the *Times*, *ante*, vol i. p. 378. The course recommended by the *Times* was followed at a later date with respect to a speech of Lord Carnarvon's; with the result (Lord Beaconsfield not feeling himself bound by the constitutional canon enunciated) that the public were seriously misled. *Post*, chap. xvii.

Thus by blurring and breaking down the signification of words, a verbal contradiction was avoided; while on the other hand, whether they were criticised for disregarding the claims of the Porte or those of the Provincials, passages could be found among the redundant wealth of the Blue Books to show how far the Government was from meriting the blame imputed to them.

The whole of the early part of the session was characterised by skirmishing of this kind; a vast number of questions were put to Ministers, which may be likened to the raids of the proverbial Uhlan to ascertain the lie of the country and the attitude of the inhabitants. There were also a few reconnaissances in force, but there was no decisive battle. These tactics, which might have been useful if merely preliminary to a general engagement, as tending to force Ministers to define their position, only served when unduly prolonged to weary Public Opinion, and perhaps on the whole tended to reinstate in public confidence a Cabinet against whose present policy, as it seemed, there was after all nothing substantial which could be urged. If Ministers did not now pledge themselves to carry out the emancipation policy to its logical end, neither were the Opposition, it seemed, ready to do so. The ostensible ground of the consent of the official Opposition to postpone the general discussion was that negotiations were still pending and that a discussion might embarrass the Cabinet. But it soon became evident that the Cabinet had swung quite away from "Emancipation," and that in Lord Derby's view, the sole difficulty of the situation was that which arose from Russia's having put forward demands which she would now be glad to abandon, if only some one would be good enough to furnish her with a plausible excuse. Accordingly, he was only anxious to build, as it was said, a "golden bridge" to facilitate Russian retreat.

While the Government thus dropped all question of alleviating the condition of the Provincials and all thought of removing the chronic cause of disturbance by insisting on a large measure of Emancipation, their supporters were unwearied in their insistence on the guilt of those who would bring down upon Europe the frightful evils of war. The Czar and the supporters of the "violet" policy in England were joined in one condemnation. A strange echo of these recriminations reaches us from the Continent:—

> In the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of this morning I find a party to which I shall never be ashamed of belonging described by a

> name which I confess a little startles me. Those English who wished to bring coercion to bear upon the Turk are, it seems, "the bloody Radicals" (die sogenannten "blutigen Radicalen.")—*Mr. E. A. Freeman* in *D. N.* May 5th.[1]

Yet with all this pious horror of war waged for the purpose of emancipating the Provincials, the assumption again begins to show itself, at first somewhat modestly but fast increasing in confidence and becoming obtrusive, that if Russia attacked her, Turkey would find an ally in England.

On the other hand, the confidence with which the "violet party had looked forward to the meeting of Parliament, and to the official leaders of the Liberal Party, gave way to a very different feeling. When it seemed that after all the claim of the "violet" policy was not to be brought to the test of a division, and especially after Mr. Fawcett's attempt of March 23rd was frustrated, there was a very general feeling that Parliament had not only failed in this particular instance in its great function of bringing the action of the Executive into accordance with the preponderating opinion of the country, but, what was far more serious, that it had almost abdicated this function altogether.

The following may be noted as the salient points of the first part of the session, between the debates in both Houses on the Address and the formal debates on the negotiations, which latter took place on April 13th in the House of Commons, and on April 16th in the House of Lords.

c. A Debate on Treaty Obligations, raised by Mr. Gladstone. (Feb. 16th.)—Mr. Gladstone attempted to draw from the Government a repudiation of Treaty Legalism. He founded his inquiries on the despatch of September 5th, 1876,[2]

> which appears to throw a good deal of light—more than I for one was previously possessed of—on the intentions of Her Majesty's Government previous to that epoch, because when they conveyed to Turkey the fact that in their judgment certain recent disclosures had made it impossible for them to interfere in defence of the Ottoman Empire in the extreme case of a war by Russia against Turkey, it certainly does appear to imply that until these disclosures were made they had distinctly cherished that intention. . . Now we are told here that in the event of war between Russia and Turkey the sympathies of the nation would be brought into direct opposition to its treaty engagements. . . . . [He proceeded to combat this view, and to develop his contention as to our

[1] *Ante*, p. 47.

[2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 357.

> treaty obligations.][1] . . . It is most important that we should know before we deal with this question how far our hands are tied by treaty engagements in the judgment of those who represent us in the face of Europe, and how far we are free to do that which is just and right in itself.

There is a marked change of tone noticeable in this debate as compared with that of February 8th. Now Mr. Gladstone was suspicious, then he had inclined to be confiding. On the other hand the Ministerialists treated the demand that ambiguities should be cleared up as a hostile demonstration. Moreover they began tauntingly to defy the Opposition to impugn the policy of the Government. Mr. Chaplin gave rise to a heated "incident" by intimating that this was the only course open to Mr. Gladstone as a man of honour. Mr. Sullivan at a later hour retorted on Lord Elcho, who wished the question to be brought to the test of a vote, that what Ministers wanted was not discussion but division.

Mr. Hardy replied to Mr. Gladstone on the part of the Government. He asserted emphatically that the Government did not consider themselves set free from the obligations of the treaties and hinted that the "humiliating position" mentioned by Lord Derby[2] referred to the remote possibility that France or Austria might call upon us, as bound to them under the Tripartite Treaty, to interpose.[3]

The Conference, Mr. Hardy said, was based on the Independence and Integrity of Turkey.

> We have proclaimed, and I proclaim again in the strongest language, that we should be wrong in every sense of the word, if we were to endeavour to employ material coercion against Turkey. (Ministerial cheers.) It is a serious thing to draw the sword, and I should feel that if at this period, after all we have said and done, we were to undertake to draw the sword against Turkey for the purpose of material coercion, we should be doing an act for which there could be no justification—(cheers)—an act which ought to bring shame into our faces—(renewed cheers)—because we should have falsified our promises, and been faithless to our engagements.

But Mr. Hardy immediately proceeded to qualify this very strong declaration.

> I deny altogether the right or the duty which is said to be imposed upon us by anything that has up to this time taken place.

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. pp. 124 and 128.
[2] In the despatch of Sept. 5th. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 357.
[3] See *ante*, vol. i. pp. 118 and 130.

> No human being can know what may arise, and, as to the future, I decline to give promises or pledges on hypothetical circumstances.

The debate was adjourned.

On February 22nd Lord Hartington stated he did not consider it satisfactory that the question of our position under the treaties should be left where it was left by Mr. Hardy's speech of the 16th. However, on Sir Stafford Northcote's intimation that negotiations were proceeding, and that the resumption of the debate would be inconvenient, the Opposition acquiesced, and an opportunity for the resumption of the debate was never afforded.

On February 26th Lord Derby in the House of Lords, by way of reply to Mr. Gladstone's suggestion based on the despatch of September 5th, referred to the despatch of May 25th to prove that the Government had never entertained the idea of fighting for Turkey.[1]

d. The Duke of Argyll's Debate. (February 20th.)—The Duke of Argyll called attention to Lord Salisbury's instructions.

> These instructions had two great ends in view; the first was some security for internal reforms in Turkey, and the other was some security for the peace of Europe. Unfortunately, neither of these two great ends have been attained; there is no reform in Turkey, and alas, my lords, there is no prospect of peace in Europe. [There were two causes of this failure.] The first is the unhappy policy which Her Majesty's Government pursued up to the end of last August, and the second is the half-heartedness, the timidity, and vacillation with which they pursued the new policy forced upon them by the public feeling of the country after the Bulgarian massacres.
>
> When on February 8th he had hinted that Turkey had been told of the decision of the Government not to coerce her, Lord Salisbury shook his head: but what was the message sent to the Porte (and not included in the Blue Book) which elicited the Grand Vizier's telegram (December 24th) of warm gratitude? It appeared a Cabinet Council was held on December 22nd, when it was decided that coercion should not be applied. If that was communicated, Lord Salisbury might just as well have left Constantinople at once
>
> He still hoped the time might come when Lord Beaconsfield looking back upon his Ministry would be enabled to say that he wielded the great power of England for the purpose and with the effect of procuring some measure of tolerable liberty for the people of Christian Turkey, and that in securing that measure of

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 356.

tolerable liberty he secured it on such conditions as would guarantee them for the future both against the odious barbarism of the Turks and the crushing autocracy of Russian Czars. (Cheers.)

The question which I have to put is not what measure the Government propose, but whether they have any measure in contemplation for the fulfilment of the promises which they have held out to the people of Turkey, or whether they have abandoned them and left them to be dealt with by Russia? (Cheers.)

Lord Derby said it was too early to say the Government had failed in the two objects specified by the Duke of Argyll—

the one, the improvement of the internal government of Turkey, and the other the maintenance of European peace. I agree with him that these were the objects, but as a matter of style I would have put the maintenance of European peace first. [If the question of the employment of coercion were raised Ministers were prepared to justify the course which had been taken.]

Lord Salisbury.—The difference in sentiment appears to be that the noble Duke [Argyll] blames us for not coercing, and the noble earl [Kimberley], who is far from blaming us for that, blames us for not saying that we intended to coerce. [*Earl Kimberley:* "No; but for not having refrained from expressing your intentions."] Does the noble earl think so meanly of the diplomatists of Europe, even of the diplomatists of Turkey, as to imagine they would not have seen through so flimsy a pretence as that? This country works in a glass beehive. . . We had to deal incidentally with the question of the internal reform of Turkey; but the principal object we had to aim at was to put a stop to the prospects of a great war. . . It is right to say that though it is true that fear of a breach with Russia was the greatest motive power for the Conference, yet there was no difference among the Plenipotentiaries on the question of coercion. Of course I did not use any threats of coercion. But neither did the Ambassador of Russia. . . . And we do not yet despair. There can be no doubt that the man principally opposed to the late Conference [Midhat]—I don't say to all internal reforms—has gone from power; and it is possible that the Sultan, in making this change, has been guided by a desire to draw nearer the European Powers. At all events, it is open to us to cherish that hope.

Lord Granville complained of the excessive candour of the Government in letting the Porte know they had nothing to fear as to coercion.

I cannot believe that the only possible means of coercing the Turk meant bombarding Constantinople. That, I think, is a perfect chimera. . . . I must regard the impossible contingency of our being obliged to exercise coercion, and then, when it came to the point, finding ourselves without the means of accomplishing it, as a trespassing upon the credulity of your lordships.

Lord Beaconsfield protested that the Guildhall speech was not meant as a defiance of Russia,[1] and expressed surprise that it should ever have been so regarded:

> I said that the policy of England is a policy of peace, that there is no country of which essentially peace is more a policy than England. We wanted no city, we desired no province, and we coveted none; but I said—and had good reasons for saying—that if there was to be a war, and if unfortunately we were brought into it, we should enter that war with the determination to carry it on until right be done. These are the statements I made at the Guildhall. Those are the statements I now make in the House of Lords. I entirely adhere to them. There was no sneer. I was as unconscious of sarcasm then as ever I was—as I am speaking at this moment. They were the sincere expressions of myself, and I believe of my colleagues. (Loud cheers.)

He set up once more the theory of Treaty-Legalism[2] and the Independence and Integrity of Turkey.

> I hold that if we lose sight of that object we shall be a ship without a rudder.

He turned his back upon the policy of the Conference, and attributed it to the Opposition and to the Duke of Argyll.

> The noble lord and his friends are of opinion that we should have coerced the Porte into the acceptance of the policy which he recommends. That is not a course which we can conscientiously profess or promise.—*Beaconsfield, H. of L.* Feb. 20th.

e. Lord Stratheden and Campbell's Debate. (*House of Lords, February 26th.*)—This may be regarded as the pendant of Mr. Gladstone's debate of February 16th. Mr. Gladstone had raised a debate to establish the "violet" interpretation of the treaties. Lord Stratheden and Campbell now contended for the "red" interpretation of the same instruments.[3] In both cases the Ministers declined to commit themselves to either view.

f. Mr. Fawcett's Debate (*March 23rd.*)—Mr. Fawcett moved a resolution which affirmed the fruitlessness of any promises of reform made by the Porte without guarantees, and the right of the Powers to demand adequate securities in the interests of peace.

Mr. Fawcett's speech was to much the same purpose as that of the Duke of Argyll (February 20th). Did the Cabinet, he desired to know, adhere to the opinion represented by Lords Salisbury's

[1] On the 13th, in the House of Commons, Mr. Samuelson had asked whether Lord Beaconsfield, when he spoke at the Guildhall, had heard of the Czar's declaration, and received the reply from Sir Stafford Northcote, "Yes, sir, of course he had."

[2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 117.

[3] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 130.

and Derby's words, and having put their hand to the plough would they go on? If so he would be satisfied. To this appeal he got no direct answer.

Sir Stafford Northcote professed himself unable to understand to what Mr. Fawcett's resolution tended, and insisted that the Cabinet, being engaged in delicate negotiations which closed their mouths, must be left to do all they could in what they believed to be the best way for "the unhappy people in some of the countries subject to Turkey." Mr. Gladstone discussed, at length and historically,[1] the subject of the treaty rights and obligations of the European Powers in reference to the Christian subjects of Turkey. However, Lord Hartington and Mr. Gladstone both declared themselves unable to support the resolution because, with negotiations pending, they considered the moment inopportune for formulating an abstract principle of policy. Mr. Fawcett offered to withdraw it, but this was objected to on the part of the Government. Many of the official Liberals left the House to avoid taking part in the division. The Government insisted on voting Mr. Fawcett's resolution down, and as this was resisted by his remaining supporters a number of forced divisions against small minorities took place on questions of adjournment.

g. Mr. Rylands' Debate (*March 27th*).—This debate may be taken as marking the time when it became evident that nothing was to be gained by seeking to pin the Government to phrases used by them at some previous time, and, as marking also, the almost total loss of belief in the conversion of Ministers to the "violet" policy.

The occasion of the debate was the rumour that Sir Henry Elliot was to go back to Constantinople as ambassador.

> *Mr. Rylands* asked, Did the Government wish to do anything or nothing? If they wished to do nothing, if they wished to go back to the do-nothing policy of Lord Derby at the beginning of the year, they could not do better than send back Sir Henry Elliot to Constantinople. . . . Whilst the Government had seemed somewhat to change their policy, Sir Henry Elliot had never changed his policy in the slightest. (Hear, hear.) Indeed, he had resisted any change on the part of the Government. . . . This conduct on the part of Sir Henry Elliot was so extraordinary that it

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 124. Sir H. D. Wolff quoted from a number of speeches made at various times to show that Mr. Gladstone formerly held quite different views with regard to the treaties from those he was now advocating. Mr. Gladstone replied by a letter in the *Times* (March 26th), calling them "garbled citations," and this again led to a personal explanation in the House of Commons on the next night (March 27th).

was impossible to suppose he would have acted as he did had he not known that he would be backed up by at least two or three members of the Cabinet. . . . He was at a loss to understand whether the Government wished the negotiations as to the Protocol to succeed or not; but if they did desire them to succeed, that end was not likely to be promoted by the announcement that Sir Henry Elliot would probably go back to his post. . . . The Government had run two horses at Constantinople—Lord Salisbury and Sir Henry Elliot—and they backed the latter to win. . . . The country had long looked with great doubt on the conduct of the Government, and had only kept quiet because they had hoped against hope for a change in their policy.

Mr. Bourke retorted by treating the speech of Mr. Rylands as a "vile and calumnious" attack upon Sir Henry Elliot, and as unfair because it did not formulate any specific charge on which the House could pronounce. Thus he threw the real question into the background, and evaded it by the stock reference to the Blue Books.

The hon. gentleman says this policy of silence cannot be very long continued. But who has brought it about? Certainly not the Government. We have tried to force the opinion of hon. gentlemen opposite, and to bring them to a division. It is a perfect farce talking of silence when all our policy is in these Blue Books, so that every person who can read may know what it is. (*Mr. Rylands:* Which policy?) Why, a debate in this House, even if it extended over a fortnight, would not produce so much information. Yet the hon. gentleman asks, what policy? ("Hear, hear," cheers, and counter-cheers.) The policy of the Government, I say, is in these Blue Books—(*Mr. Rylands:* Which policy?)—and if hon. gentlemen will only read them they will know what it is. (Cheers and counter-cheers.)—*Mr. Bourke.*

Mr. Gladstone pointed out that Sir Henry Elliot had by his despatches identified himself with two especially "red" notions, viz. the conception of support of Turkey as identified with British interests, and the legalistic view of the treaties.

If I understand the despatch of September 4th,[1] its meaning is this: "The severity is needless and monstrous, but there is something else which we must look at besides the severity, and besides the degree in which it is needless or monstrous. However needless and however monstrous it is, we must be prepared to endure it and to take no decisive measures against it, if by these measures we should disturb Turkey in the possession of power, any alteration in which would be fatal to British interests." That is to say, the sense we entertain of what British interests require is to be for us the measure of right and wrong all over the world. That is the meaning of this passage, and that is the meaning of the whole conduct of Sir Henry Elliot from first to last.

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 313.

[Lord Derby in his despatch of September 21st, had repudiated that doctrine.] Now, I should wish to ask What are to be the consequences to civilisation, to humanity, and to public order, if British interests are to be the rule for British agents all over the world? If they are to measure the right and wrong, you cannot deny to every other country on the globe the privilege which you have claimed for yourself. For French interests would be the measure of right or wrong for France, Austrian interests would be the measure of right and wrong for Austria, and Russian interests would be the measure of right and wrong for Russia. I, for my part, will not lose the right to protest against this doctrine when it is advanced on the part of Russia, Austria, Germany or France, and therefore I will make my protest now, when it is unhappily advanced on the part of England.

[Again,] if I understand [Sir H. Elliot], anything recorded in a protocol will be an infringement of the Treaty of Paris. "The protocol will constitute an infringement of the Treaty of Paris, for it will confer upon the Powers the right of interference in the internal administration of Turkey from which by that treaty they were debarred."[1] But that is exactly the object of the protocol we are now about. How is it possible under these circumstances that Sir Henry Elliot can become the representative of British opinions at Constantinople?—*Mr. Gladstone.*

Mr. Gladstone proceeded to reiterate his contention as to the treaty obligation, and especially as to the position of Russia under the treaty of Kainardji. His contention drew forth an interjectional protest from Mr. Bourke, and a short disclaimer from Sir Stafford Northcote, but Ministers did not argue the question.

h. The failure of Parliament.—Thus very early in the session there became apparent the falsification of the expectation that the action of Parliament would confirm the Government in the position to which, as had been believed, they had advanced under the pressure of Public Opinion when they sent Lord Salisbury to Constantinople. The solid Conservative majority was proving unexpectedly docile, and the Government was evidently inclined ruthlessly to "apply their majority;"[2] a prospect which seemed sufficient to deter the leaders of the Opposition from pressing them as out-of-door opinion had pressed them during the recess.

Meanwhile the comments of the newspapers reflect the intense interest with which Public Opinion continued to watch the course which the Government were pursuing and the keen disappointment felt at what was beginning to be recognised as the failure of Parliament. Many of these comments show too how closely the refusal

[1] Elliot to Derby, Sept. 30th, 1876; *Turkey*, i. 1877 No. 568.
[2] Bagehot's *Eng. Const.* p. 141.

to be parties to a policy of enforcing the demands of the Powers upon Turkey was connected with the policy of supporting Turkey in resistance to those demands. Thus the "red" policy which had been left for dead in December, raises its head once more.

> [Ministers] insist upon representing themselves as a happy and united family, and they are almost vehement in their declarations that there has been no change in their principles from first to last. They resent with equal heat the insinuations of internal dissension and the charge of inconsistency. It is probably natural that they should adopt this attitude, but in assuming it they do themselves much injury. . . . The Ministry were not impenetrable to the necessities of the case at home and abroad, and did alter their policy most materially. They were reluctant to admit it when the change happened, just as they are reluctant to admit it now; and then as now their reluctance was prejudicial to their purposes. They went into the Conference at Constantinople taking as their first principle "the maintenance of the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire,"—a venerable phrase, which they embalmed again in the Royal Speech last week,—but as soon as their proposals were stated the Porte saw that the phrase meant nothing in the way of protection, and protested that it had been entrapped. . . . They have shown themselves willing to interfere between the Sultan and his subjects. They have approved the introduction into Bulgaria of an authority not directly responsible to the Sultan and supported by a force of foreign composition, and they have joined in urging upon the Sultan and his Ministers compliance with the scheme thus elaborated; but they are not prepared to use or join in using any force or demonstration of force beyond earnest adjurations to bring him and them to comply with it. It is too evident that the Ministry have advanced to a position which exposes them to an attack in front and in the rear. They will be told they have either gone too far or not far enough.—*T.* Feb. 12th.

> The *Spectator* fears that the meeting of Parliament will not immediately improve our Eastern policy. The majority of Tory members, it seems evident, are not disposed to press their leaders to insist upon the Sultan's acceptance of the policy of the Conference. . . . On the other hand the Liberals display unexpected hesitation. They are not all willing to admit that they are bound to employ force, and are especially unwilling to employ force under any agreement which can be entered into with Russia alone. The temper of Parliament seems favourable to the quiescent policy which Lord Derby if left to himself is sure to recommend; but this mood may be altered by the course of events which are sure to happen, though members are still expecting peace to be preserved, or by a divergence not yet proved, but strongly suspected, between the House of Commons, and the people

who elect it. . . . There is still no certainty that the country outside Parliament agrees with the hesitating policy of its representatives. It is admitted that two opinions have the support of great numbers of electors, the opinion that we are not concerned till Constantinople is in danger, and the opinion that we ought to protect the Turkish Christians, but it is not yet decided which opinion is in the majority. The Turkophiles are very confident, but there is grave reason to doubt if their confidence is shared by the Government, or by men whose business it is to understand in what direction the constituencies sway. Very impartial men mutter that a dissolution might change everything, and if a dissolution would change everything the opinion of the electors who would be all-powerful will have great weight even now. . . Meanwhile, there is no victory for the Government, but only a momentary acquiescence in a situation which the Government did not seek. The immediate outlook, however, is dark enough, the quiescence of both parties involving a temporary course of action which both parties for their different reasons deplore. The Government must remain neuter; Russia can do as she likes towards Turkey, while Turkey can behave as she likes towards the Christians. The *Spectator* hopes this most unsatisfactory state of things may be brought to an end, either by events, or by a definite intimation from the country that it is not content with it. That intimation will, of course, not arrive until it is certain that the Government has no further intention of doing anything except sit still, an intimation which they have not yet unmistakably given.—*Spec.* Feb. 17th.

The *Daily News*, referring to the exposition of the view of the Government on the treaties, says Mr. Hardy so qualified every statement as to leave it without a meaning at all.—(Feb. 17th.)

Having clearly shown that the grand scheme of joining Russia in the task of applying systematic coercion to Turkey is a policy that would be absolutely suicidal to the Liberal party, we may now find it a work of comparative ease to prove that the enforcement of coercive measures by Russia alone is one to which Englishmen, whatever their political faith, are bound to offer undivided hostility. . . . That England should assist or countenance with moral support the policy of putting Turkey to death, is a course of conduct which the British nation cannot possibly approve. . . . The Porte has shown convincingly, in the rejoinder of their representatives, that the preliminary Conference, from whose sittings they were excluded, did go beyond the programme laid down, and, to a certain extent, the Sultan's Government were justified on that ground in refusing to accept even the mitigated propositions. But they did not reject the substantial reforms ; and their conduct now . . . as well as the fact that the Porte, with considerable prospects of success, is making peace with the revolted provinces, cuts from under the feet of Russia any reasonable pretext for assailing

Turkey. . . . As for England, we feel convinced that outside the small circle which may have political reasons for the special development of its aims and theories, the nation, as a whole, will speak with no uncertain voice. They will recognise the broad, startling fact that this war—if war should come—will be a groundless, a wicked, and an aggressive war, waged for the old purposes of Russia, and not to attain the end she has put forward. . . . We wait to see whether the Liberal Opposition will range themselves on the side of peace and British interests, or lend the aid of their influence and eloquence to further the designs of an insincere, encroaching, and despotic Power.—*D. T.* Feb. 15th.

The guerilla warfare of question and verbal criticisms is noticed from time to time in *Punch's* "Essence of Parliament."

Sure never was such a questioning as now of nights. . . . For the rest much wild and whirling talk of these treaties and their force . . . but what these treaties do in truth bind us to, or the other Power party thereto, or the Turk, or if indeed they bind either to aught, is more than I could learn.—*Punch*, Feb. 24th.

But methinks this ripping up of old sores [Mr. Gladstone had asked, who the "important personages" were, who Sir H. Elliot had said wished to drive the Turk out of Europe] is poor work, and so the House and the country do seem to hold it. . . . A mighty press . . . to hear his Grace my Lord Duke of Argyll fire off his big gun on the Eastern matter, which they do indeed well name the Eastern Question, for methinks, here at least, 'tis all question and no answer. . . . And so to his indictment, and spoke mighty well and fiery for an hour and a-half, and well listened to; but when all was done methought there was nothing to answer, his gun being as it were shotted with blank cartridge . . . My Lord Derby did hint at the reforms promised by the Turk, and how it was but reasonable to give them time to try to do better, and Lord, to see how drowning men will catch at straws when they have nought better to catch at, for the House did cheer this mightily . . . For my part I see nothing for it but the strong hand of the Muscovite, that at least knoweth his own mind.—*Punch*, March 1st.

The *Spectator*, alluding to the giving up of Mr. Gladstone's adjourned debate, says the House of Commons agrees virtually not to discuss the only subject in which the country is interested. It is by this time pretty clear that if the policy of England in Turkey is to become what it ought to be, the English people must speak out in a way to strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees, not only of Her Majesty's Government, but of Her Majesty's Opposition. The only Parliamentary speaker who has as yet risen near the height of the emergency is the Duke of Argyll, and even his masterly and statesmanlike speech of Tuesday was carefully toned down and weakened at its conclusion in order

to render it commonly tolerable to the ears of such a Liberal as Lord Kimberley, not to mention such a Liberal as Lord Stratheden and Campbell.—(Feb. 24th.)

The *Daily Telegraph* writes (of the Duke of Argyll's debate): After such a faint attack and such a plain answer, the feeble policy of co-operative coercion may be regarded as put out of its misery. If it was ever to lift its head as a living project of statesmanship, last night was the time of grace; but the protagonists of St. James's Hall did not venture to offer to Parliament one of their half-dozen patent modes of bloodless violence, and the utter failure of the idea in the Upper Chamber must lead to its abandonment in the Lower. If such an untoward and unjustifiable event befalls as the outbreak of war, much of its sin will lie upon those who in this country have hounded on the pacific Czar to pious bloodshed; who have enthusiastically misrepresented the nation and disparaged its Government.—(Feb. 21st.)

The debate showed that the representative statesmen of the Liberal party no longer differ from the Government.—(Feb. 22nd.)

Peace lies within reach of the Powers which call themselves Christian if they will only be true to the plain obligations of that name. The Porte still shows itself bent on carrying out the reforms which it was the object of the Conference to press upon Turkey.—(Feb. 24th.)

We hope the armies of the Czar will be withdrawn from the frontier with the understanding that Europe gives Turkey time and fair play to profit by the stern warning she has received. If she does not show herself ready to do so she will fall into even greater dangers than the present. If that dissatisfies any members of the St. James's Hall coterie, let them think of the alternative to which they toiled to push the Powers. Let them weigh together the two little words "Peace" and "War." Let them reflect upon the difference between the sight of a vast Russian host melting back to barrack and to village, and the spectacle of its ignorant masses launched across the Danube to massacre and to ravage in the outraged name of religion.—(*Feb. 28th.*)

On February 19th and 20th the *Daily Telegraph* gave a conspicuous place to long letters signed "Anglophil," insisting that a declaration of war by Russia against Turkey would imperil vital English interests in Asia. In its leading articles the *Daily Telegraph* harps upon the same theme. It speaks of an indecision which "betrays the best interests of the nation," and asks (with what—to some minds at least—will appear a startling anti-climax),

> How long is this tampering with the foundations of Empire to go on? Will our sentimental politicians remain forgetful of the fact that they also have a country, until the legions of the Czar are across the frontier, not merely in Europe, but in Asia itself?—*D. T.* Feb. 19th.

Returning again to the contingency of a Russian invasion of Asia Minor:—

> The blow would vibrate through every Oriental land and tremble along the fibres of the British dominions. What course the English nation and its Government at the time might think it proper to follow, how the stroke might be parried or more directly met, it is not for us to say. All we have to do now is to raise a warning voice, and strive to awaken the public to the momentous consequences. . . . "Each time," says "Anglophil," with unquestionable force, "that a fresh chance of opposing Russian aggression is offered, we should bear in mind the Sibylline leaves, assured that at each opportunity missed our chance is lessened, and the price to be paid grows greater. If now we sit with folded arms, and allow Russia to seize Kars and Erzeroum, our material interests in the East will be directly damaged, and our prestige will sink throughout Asia and the world." It is for England to ponder over those words, and act as befits her sense of what she desires to be—a firmly seated Power or a State in decay.—*D. T.* Feb. 22nd.

> I am driven to the conclusion that the hidden motive of a large party is the hope of England's being finally drawn into a war against Russia. It is for all careful people to consider this contingency, and take counsel accordingly. On any other supposition than that England is to be ultimately obliged to go to war against Russia, I cannot conceive a valid reason for abstention [from coercing Turkey] at this stage of the question.—*Diplomaticus* in *D. N.* Feb. 26th.

> No one who has merely *read* the debates in the House of Commons on the Turkish Question can form any true conception of the temper of the Conservative party. Unquestionably that temper is as much more pro-Turkish than the temper of the Government, as that of the leaders of Opposition bench is less so. It is not merely that men like Mr. Butler-Johnstone get loudly cheered when they declare their conviction that the Turkish Army and Fleet are the advanced-guard of the English Army and Fleet, and that whenever England and Russia embrace, it will be the death-agony of one of them. . . . The most instructive thing is to watch the manner in which the Conservatives cheer, or refrain from cheering, when the Leader of the House is speaking. . . . The plain truth is that, since the Session began, the policy of Lord Salisbury has lost ground sadly with the Government, and the policy of Sir Henry Elliot gained ground. . . . While the Opposition have shown no bold front at all in either House, the Conservative party have made their bias more and more felt on every official speaker, insensibly stimulating that side of his mind which is favourable to Turkey and hostile to Russia, and throwing cold water on that side of it which realises most deeply the wrongs and sufferings of Turkish victims. . . . If a few weeks hence Russia takes the field alone against Turkey, it is very difficult to say

how far the vehemence of the Tories and the sympathies of the Prime Minister might not lead us. Already the impression that we have some right to demand the demobilisation of the Russian army is beginning to pervade the Tory and Turkish Press, and we should fear very much that popular ignorance and skilful statecraft might out of that vague impression "suck no small advantage," and embark us in a diplomatic quarrel of which the natural issue would be a quarrel other than diplomatic.—*Spec.* March 31st.[1]

Mr. Fawcett intended a discussion without a division, and Government desired to engraft upon it a division with a discussion, while various speakers took the opportunity for a conversation which only aimed to illustrate the great topic of the day. . . . It will naturally be asked whether this was a useful or commendable episode. . . . Is not a conversation of this aimless, pointless, desultory character a waste of time and a folly? No doubt the Chancellor of the Exchequer wished to give it this character, and had his reasons. But there remains the question, What is the place of the British Parliament in the midst of a negotiation protracted to unusual length, passing through extraordinary phases, and accompanied by events of terrible interest? If diplomacy may always demand to perform its mysteries in dead silence, and not a tongue must move lest the avalanche fall, the function of Parliament would be reduced to nothing as soon as foreign became more interesting than domestic affairs. . . . If the representatives of the people are to do nothing and say nothing at all because the game is in other hands, then, at least in one direction, our Parliamentary system has to acknowledge itself no better off than the rudest absolutism. What is more, it would have to confess that it utterly fails to represent the real character and practice of the people. The whole country is expressing its opinion on the matter of the impending negotiation with the utmost freedom, and if Parliament says nothing on the subject it will be the only company of Englishmen that does so. In a very short period we may witness events that will raise and stir to its very depth the question who is responsible for them. . . . It will be asked, Was nothing said while day after day a great cause was steadily going to ruin? Did no one open his mouth? Should the fears of many be realised, then we apprehend that even so pointless a demonstration as that of Friday night will be regarded rather as an honourable exception than as a failure or a mistake. . . . Unless it discusses its own Blue Books, the world will never be acquainted with the fact that it possesses a whole literature of Turkish misrule. It is true that Parliament may know a good deal and talk a good deal, and yet come to a very lame conclusion. It is, however, bound to act up to its own law of action, and that is liberty of speech. . . . Thus much is certain. Neither outdoor agitation on the one hand, nor Ministerial reserve on the other, has done much for the Christian subjects of Turkey.

[1] Article entitled "The Dangerous Bias of the Tory Party."

Perhaps a few plain-spoken utterances in Parliament might do more.—*T.* March 26th.

We have urged both the Government and the Opposition many times during the few weeks of the present Session to act on the principle, which all our public men must acknowledge, that Parliament is not merely a body intrusted with the passing or the rejection of certain definite proposals, but is especially the great authoritative platform from which the opinion of the country may be declared. It is no fault of ours if the theory, now somewhat tardily condemned, was ever allowed to prevail, according to which the whole duty of the House of Commons, at an important crisis in foreign affairs, is to lay its finger on its lips and personate Silence, while Her Majesty's Ministers decide, on their own responsibility, the destiny of the country. This curious theory, so markedly in antagonism to all English feeling, never that we can remember was allowed to assert itself so boldly and decisively as during the present Session. . . . It cannot be denied, however, that, to some extent, the Opposition is itself responsible for the failure of the House of Commons to bring the whole subject to the test of timely and full discussion. Mr. Bright yesterday remarked, as we understand his words, on the fact that the public out of doors showed a more constant and active interest in passing events than the Houses of Parliament have done. One cause of this, we believe, so far as the Opposition was concerned, is to be found in the fact that the strong influence of one eminent public man[1] was brought to bear to prevent any Parliamentary movement which even seemed to tend in the direction of a coercion of Turkey. We cannot complain of the intervention of a counsel which was at least consistent with itself. The principle that anything is better than participation in a war is intelligible, is always entitled to consideration, and is sometimes worthy of high respect. But an influence based upon that principle was, it seems to us, particularly unfortunate in this instance. The misfortune is that by our very efforts to cling to peace we may be only once again drifting into war. [One way there was by which all the danger could have been averted. Turkey could have been compelled without war to do justice to the subject populations—that would have been a policy of peace.] The policy which ignores the real dangers, and tries to evade responsibilities, may lead us any day into war; is perhaps even now carrying us, like Carlyle's[2] "blind Titan," stumbling down that perilous way.—*D. N.* March 27th.

A somewhat remarkable article occurs in a London Sunday newspaper which speaks of

the failure of Parliament as an instrument of guidance or control, which has been strikingly illustrated in reference to the Turkish question. . . . During the last Session, and during the

[1] Mr. Bright himself is evidently the eminent man referred to. See *D. N.* May 5th, *post*, § 5.

[2] The reference appears to be to the passage in Matthew Arnold's *Heine's Grave.*

first part of the present Session, the House of Commons has shown neither courage nor intelligence. The extra-Parliamentary debates have done more to spread knowledge and promote the growth of opinion than anything that has taken place in the Assemblies of either Lords or Commons. During the whole of last Session the country had reason to believe that the Government was doing its best to go wrong; but the House of Commons did not so much as extort from it any intelligible account of the policy it was pursuing, or the objects it desired to attain. . . . The House of Commons, as it exists, has, in reference to this question, performed none of the duties the Constitution assigns to it. . . . The House of Commons has shown itself perfectly willing to allow matters to drift, and see what will come of it. This is certainly not the wish, nor the feeling, of the British people. . . . We look with confidence to the people to recall the House to something like dignity and duty. A few years more of the present callousness and indifference would make Parliament an object of contempt.—*Weekly Times*, April 1st.

§ 3. *Lord Derby's Protocol.*

a. The "Golden Bridge for Russia" theory.—The negotiations for whose sake discussion in Parliament was thus postponed dragged on through March.[1] Peace, on the footing of the *status quo ante*, was concluded between the Porte and Servia on March 1st. The armistice with Montenegro was prolonged from time to time. Its ultimate lapse corresponds with the break-down of the negotiations, and only precedes the Russian declaration of war by a few days.

The English Ministry were in no hurry to reply to the Russian circular of January 19th.[2] A hint was thrown out (the suggestion was ascribed to Midhat Pasha) that a fixed time should be given to Turkey to carry out the reforms, and if at the end of it no progress had been made she should then submit to control.

Russia, it seems, was not unwilling to consent to this, on condition that it should be understood that if at the end of the period of probation things were no better, the European Powers should then undertake the task of enforcing their demands. But Russia was not willing to allow the matter simply to drop. On Feb. 26th Lord Derby received from the Russian ambassador a communication to the following effect:—

Russia had now 500,000 men under arms, and ready for battle. Nevertheless she preferred a pacific solution. But for this

[1] See Argyll, chap. ix. and the Blue Books, *Turkey*, viii. ix. and xv. 1877.
[2] *Turkey*, viii. 1877, No. 1; *ante*, p. 148.

> purpose the Russian Government must have some serious grounds to justify their disarming after the sacrifices which had been imposed on the country. It depended on the Powers to render such a solution possible, by maintaining the necessity of a real improvement in the condition of the Christian population of Turkey, and by declaring that when the term allowed for carrying into effect the reforms had expired without sufficient result, they would seek the means of imposing them.—*Turkey*, xv. No. 189.

But any pledge of this kind was exactly what Lord Derby was so anxious to avoid giving. He had already (Feb. 21st) laid down the only aspect in which he would allow that the situation could be regarded, as follows :—

> It is understood by Her Majesty's Government that the object of the Russian Government is to secure an honourable retreat from their present position.—*Turkey*, xv. No. 168.

Lord Derby fastened on the notion of "the golden bridge," and refused to admit any other necessity. Early in March, General Ignatieff "being obliged to go abroad to consult an oculist" was instructed to give the several Governments explanations which would very much facilitate their answer to the Russian circular of January 19th. Count Schouvaloff, the Russian ambassador in England, went to Paris to meet the General, and it was understood that the Russian diplomatists and Lord Derby were striving to agree upon some form of words from which Lord Derby insisted on eliminating anything which could be construed as pledging England or the other Powers to action in the matter.

> The *Times* says Russia has abandoned her demand for a promise of coercion, and there is no longer any question of a definite time being fixed. Lord Derby is about to propose a protocol.—(March 13th.)
>
> The *Daily News* says we are witnessing the last attempt to avert war. If Russia can acquire some security for the better government of the Christians of Turkey, even if it be much less than that which it not long since sought to obtain, it will, we are told, demobilise its armies and hope for the best.—(March 14th.)
>
> The *Daily Telegraph* notes that as everything of a binding character disappears from the proposed memorandum, it might seem the reasons for Russia's demobilising must also disappear. Nevertheless it thinks "the building of the bridge" may prove successful.—(March 14th.)
>
> Again, it speaks of the mobilisation of the Russian army as the only circumstance which hinders peace. It intimates that the English Ministry is inclined to insist on an engagement to demobilise being inserted in the protocol.—(March 15th.)

During the next few days the *Daily Telegraph* treats a protocol binding England to nothing, as the consideration to be paid to induce Russia to demobilise, and insists that the position of the English Government is represented by the phrase "No demobilisation, no protocol."

b. Murmurings out-of-doors. — Meanwhile low murmurings began to arise out-of-doors, against the lame and impotent conclusion which seemed impending. To hush up the whole matter, to let the last word be "as you were," to allow Turkey and the condition of her Christian subjects to pass out of mind until some new accumulation of atrocities should once more force the "eternal Eastern Question" upon Europe, this was not what people had bargained for when Lord Salisbury's mission reconciled them to the Government.

> We do not know how to interpret the leading idea which now inspires our own official policy in any way but one. Its meaning seems to be that if Russia interferes it will be against the Turk; if we interfere it ought to be for the Turk; and therefore the wise way to compromise is to pair off England and Russia, and leave the Christian provinces to their fate. This would, indeed, be a sorry ending of all that national agitation which stirred the country last autumn.—*D. N.* March 16th.

> The *Spectator* says if the proposals under consideration are sincere, and mean what is understood, the negotiations are "nothing less than disgraceful to all concerned."—(March 17th.)

> Lord Derby does not seem quite to understand what opponents of his policy are at present trying to impress upon him. If he did, he would hardly keep on reminding them that public discussion may tend to mar the progress of the negotiations. They have always the answer that they are not satisfied that these negotiations can lead to anything worth having.—*D. N.* March 23rd.

> [I write to express in your columns] the feeling of profound dissatisfaction and discouragement with which, as I am convinced, very many Liberals outside the walls of Parliament witness the total inaction of their party-leaders at a great crisis in a momentous question. We—if I may make bold thus to speak in their name—deeply regretted that Lord Hartington did not, early in the present Session, call for a vote of censure on the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Ministers. . . . . That it would be voted down by a majority elected rather to rally round the domestic beer-barrel, than to pronounce on international questions, was indeed certain. That the division list would conspicuously label a number of sham Liberals, hitherto only suspected of despotic leanings, was scarcely less so. But a great issue would thus be placed before the country with the completeness which nothing but a full Parliamentary discussion can insure. . . . . Such were our hopes. They were

> disappointed. The front bench in its mistrust of the Opposition forgot the country. England seems about to play a leading part in a hypocritical and cowardly farce. The Ministerial Press of this morning announces, with the loudest jubilations, a great diplomatic victory achieved by Lord Derby, which consists in his having compelled Russia "to be satisfied with an undertaking by the Great Powers to reconsider the affairs of Turkey at some future time, if at some future time they should seem to require consideration." [In view of a possible consummation so humiliating, the leader of the Opposition should] intervene with the declaration that he will be no accomplice in thus adjourning all effective effort to obtain some morsels of security, justice, and assured domestic honour for the Christian subjects of the Porte. —*Mr. Sedley Taylor* in *D. N.* Mar. 20th.[1]

At this juncture appeared Mr. Gladstone's *Lessons in Massacre*.[2] After restating the indictment,[3] Mr. Gladstone urges the duty of the moment. He insists that policy, no less than humanity, requires that united Europe shall, at the very least, sentence Turkey to submit to such restraints on the exercise of administrative power as all Europe has declared to be indispensable.

> But, above all, let us not cover with the name of compromises the new shifts we may devise to hide the nakedness of our minds and the feebleness of our wills. A "respite" for Turkey is simply a respite to the criminal, not from punishment, but from prevention, a solemn licence to continue his misdeeds. "A year of grace" to Turkey is to Turkey's victims only another year of debasement. . . . I have a firm conviction that when the people of England tell their mind to the world and to the Porte in the choice of their representatives from time to time the lesson conveyed by their acts, so far as it goes, will be, "You shall not do it again."—*Lessons in Massacre*, p. 80.

People were by this time familiar with the argument, and those who admitted its cogency had already ranged themselves in the "violet" ranks. The publication of the pamphlet does not appear to have brought any great access of force to the "violet" policy just at this juncture.[4]

c. Apprehended Danger to France.—While these negotiations were pending, a curious rumour got afloat that in the event of war breaking out in the East Germany would at once attack France.[5]

[1] *Punch* (March 21st) draws the protocol as the "Pons Asinorum," and asks, "Will it bear the Bear?"

[2] It seems to have been published on March 12th. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 81.

[3] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 82.

[4] Compare *Spec.* March 17th, *ante*, vol. i. p. 87.

[5] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 104.

Whether there was any substance behind the rumour does not appear; but the fear of such a result was no doubt not without effect in causing a few to think Lord Derby might have good reason for staving off war between Russia and Turkey at any price.

We note a curious tendency to attribute a Machiavelian *rôle* to Prince Bismarck.

> Once let England and Russia engage in Eastern war and all Western Europe lies prostrate before the feet of Germany. "Two years ago," says a recent writer, "Germany stayed her hand at the intercession of England and Russia when about to crush defenceless France." That hand was stayed unwillingly; nor was it long before means were found to prevent a repetition of such interference, when next the greatest military machine the world has yet seen was to be set in motion towards the West. Six months after that interference the revolt in the Herzegovina broke out. Within one year 90,000 chassepots captured from the French were sold to Servia by the German Government. It is needless to follow the evidences of that master-hand of European policy in the present entanglement.—"*Libra*" in *D. N.* Feb. 26th.

The St. Petersburg special correspondent of the *Daily News* says—

> there is a reason urged in favour of peace which he has the highest authority for saying is the reason which has the most influence upon the Emperor, a far more active and powerful one than his well-known repugnance to war. It is the menacing attitude of Germany towards France.—(March 12th.)

The next day the *Daily News* speaks of

> the fear of a German attack upon France, which has made even the Czarewitch for the moment an advocate of peace.—(March 13th.)

The *Spectator* disbelieves the rumour, which, it says, has grown stronger all the week, observing that

> the "electric suspicion," as Carlyle calls it, which seems to pervade political society is the worst feature of the present situation of Europe. Anything is believed of any State provided it is only bad enough and wild enough.—(March 17th.)

d. The Protocol signed.—The negotiations resulted in a meeting of the representatives of the Six Powers at the Foreign Office on Saturday, March 31st, for the purpose of signing a protocol.

Before signing, however, the Russian ambassador made the following declaration:—

> If peace with Montenegro is concluded and the Porte accepts the advice of Europe, and shows itself ready to replace its forces

on a peace footing, and seriously to undertake the reforms mentioned in the protocol, let it send to St. Petersburg a Special Envoy to treat of disarmament, to which his Majesty the Emperor would also, on his part, consent.

If massacres similar to those which have occurred in Bulgaria take place, this would necessarily put a stop to the measures of demobilisation.

Lord Derby declared as follows:—

Inasmuch as it is solely in the interests of European peace that her Britannic Majesty's Government have consented to sign the protocol proposed by that of Russia, it is understood beforehand that, in the event of the object proposed not being attained—namely, reciprocal disarmament on the part of Russia and Turkey, and peace between them—the protocol in question shall be regarded as null and void.

Then the Italian ambassador declared that:—

Italy is only bound by the signature of the protocol of this day's date so long as the agreement happily established between all the Powers by the protocol itself is maintained.

The protocol was then solemnly signed.

It recited that—

The Powers believe that they have grounds for hoping that the Porte will profit by the present lull to apply energetically such measures as will cause that effective improvement in the condition of the Christian populations which is unanimously called for as indispensable to the tranquillity of Europe. . . . If their hopes should once more be disappointed, and if the condition of the Christian subjects of the Sultan should not be improved in a manner to prevent the return of the complications which periodically disturb the peace of the East, they think it right to declare that such a state of affairs would be incompatible with their interests and those of Europe in general. In such case they reserve to themselves to consider in common as to the means which they may deem best fitted to secure the well-being of the Christian populations and the interest of the general peace.—*Protocol Done at London*, March 31st.[1]

The *Daily News* treats the protocol as having thrown the Christian provinces entirely into Russia's hands. It has never advocated any such trust of Russia as the Government have lately displayed.—(April 2nd.)

The *Daily Telegraph* notes there is no coercion in the protocol. It is of the nature of a contract, and lapses if demobilisation does not take place.—(April 2nd.)

[1] See *Turkey*, viii. 1877, No. 7. These papers were presented on the reassembling of the House of Commons after the Easter recess, and appeared in the newspapers about April 6th. Some of the papers appear again in *Turkey*, xv. 1877.

> What then, it may be asked, does Russia find in the protocol which is worth all this trouble? The answer is for her to give—not for us.—*D.T.* April 6th.
>
> [Lord Derby's declaration] makes the whole value of the protocol depend on Russia's taking a step which Russia says she will only take when the better government of the Christian provinces is assured, and when, therefore, there is no further need of any protocol. If the Opposition are not satisfied with such a policy as this; if they think, as we do, that it is the merest anti-climax to all that has been done already, and that it virtually renounces the very objects which the country especially sought to secure, it would be well, surely, to take some early opportunity of giving public and formal expression to their conviction.—*D. N.* April 6th.

e. The Parade Debates.—For a moment it seemed as if Lord Derby might succeed in persuading people to say no more about it; and that things might quietly slide back into the old groove. The Government hastened to fill up the British Embassy at Constantinople, and Mr. Layard was selected for the post.[1]

The House of Commons reassembled after the Easter recess on April 5th. It was intimated that there was no longer any need for reticence in Parliament, and accordingly debates took place which resemble a formal parade, on the part of the Opposition, rather than a serious encounter.

These parade debates mark at once the failure of Parliament to keep any grasp of the foreign policy of the country, the failure of the Parliamentary Opposition to secure adequate consideration for the particular policy approved by the weight of opinion (as they contended) out of doors, and the failure of the negotiations.

Even before the debates began which had been delayed for the consummation of the protocol, the protocol itself had broken down.

Of the speeches which were delivered on these occasions, not much need be said. They dealt rather with the past than with the future, with criticism rather than guidance. In the House of Commons, on April 13th, Sir Stafford Northcote would not admit

[1] Sir Henry Elliot, on leaving Constantinople (*ante*, p. 137) "to report upon the situation of affairs in Turkey" (*Turkey*, ii. 1877, No. 238) left Mr. Jocelyn as *Chargé d'Affaires* (*Turkey*, xv. 1877, No. 21).

Subsequently the Government thought that it was necessary that England should be represented by some one holding the rank of ambassador, and Mr. Layard was accordingly selected to hold the appointment temporarily (*Ibid* No. 434).

The Turkish Ministers expressed the satisfaction of the Sultan at "this delicate mark of attention," and alluded to Mr. Layard's reputation for "sentiments of friendship for our country" (*Ibid.* No. 479).

that all hope of peace was at an end. Lord Hartington contended that the protocol recognised the principle of coercion, and that this recognition could not be escaped by the proviso. He characterised as a grave diplomatic error the assumption that Russia's demands were the maximum that could possibly be asked of the Porte by Europe. This was to cede to Russia the position she had always coveted—the position of counsel for the plaintiff; he suggested that even at this last hour peace might be preserved if England would make it plain to Turkey that the demand upon her was the demand of Europe at large which she would not be allowed to evade, and not the demand of Russia only.

In the House of Lords on April 16th, Lord Granville drew a distinction between ordinary wars and a mere war of police; if six policemen insist on a rough's moving off, the rough may perhaps kick the shins of one policeman; but serious opposition is out of the question. A firm attitude would have been effectual, but possibly it was now too late even for that.

Lord Derby alluded to the autumn agitation:—

> However humane the feeling which may have led to it I cannot but think that agitation itself did considerable mischief, because it gave a false impression abroad as to the real feelings and opinion of the English people.

He repudiated the doctrine laid down by Lord Hartington that the protocol recognised "coercion." What the protocol provided was—

> that if certain things were not done by the Turkish Government, we being the judges of whether they were done or not, then at some time which was not fixed—we being the judges as to when that time had arrived—we should consider with certain other Powers and say what we should then do.—*Lord Derby, H. of L.* April 16th.

f. The extinguisher catches fire.—Lord Derby does not appear to have entertained the expectation that the matter would be happily disposed of.[1] But even if he had been inclined to cherish any such hopes, they must, one would think, have been dissipated by a conversation which he had with the Turkish ambassador on April 9th.

> His Excellency said that the Porte felt that the contents of he protocol were derogatory to the Sultan's dignity and independence, and that rather than accede to its provisions, it would be better for Turkey to face the alternative of war, even of an unsuccessful war,

[1] *Post*, p. 182.

resulting in the loss of one or two provinces. . . . As Musurus Pasha spoke of the Turks retiring into Asia, if so compelled, and maintaining there their independence of rule, I asked him whether he meant seriously to contend that it would be better, in the interests of the Porte, that the Turks should be driven out of Europe than that the Sultan's Government should tacitly acquiesce in a document to which they were not required or requested to give any formal and express assent. . . . Musurus Pasha replied that the protocol was a virtual abrogation of the 9th Article of the Treaty of Paris; that to allow it to pass in silence would, in the opinion of the Porte, be to surrender all that Turkey had fought for in regard to the Sultan's rights of freedom from foreign intervention, and that this was a humiliation to which his Government would not at any risk submit.—*Derby to Jocelyn*, April 9th.[1]

On the very day (April 9th) of this interview, the Porte issued a circular despatch in which they appealed to the Treaty of Paris, and protested against the protocol as a violation of International Law.[2]

Lord Derby had another conversation with the Turkish ambassador when the latter communicated this circular.

I expressed to his Excellency my deep regret at the view which the Porte had taken of a proceeding the principal object of which had been to extricate Turkey from a position of extreme embarrassment and danger. . . . Musurus Pasha stated that his Government were not prepared [to adopt such measures as sending an ambassador to St. Petersburg to treat on the question of mutual disarmament], and he further expressed an opinion that matters could not be settled in a satisfactory manner unless the Powers consented to annul the protocol. I pointed out in reply, that the divergence between the views of our two Governments appeared so wide as to render discussion useless, and I said I did not see what further steps Her Majesty's Government could take to avert a war which appeared to have become inevitable.—*Derby to Jocelyn*, April 12th.[3]

On April 24th, Count Schouvaloff communicated to Lord Derby a circular despatch which announced the commencement of war.

There remains no alternative but to allow the state of things to continue which the Powers have declared incompatible with their interests and those of Europe in general, or else to seek to obtain by coercion what the unanimous efforts of the Cabinets

[1] *Turkey*, xv. 1877, No. 503.

[2] *Ibid.* xii. 1877. It appears also as No. 519 of *Turkey*, xv. 1877. The morning papers of April 14th contained a Reuter's telegram which gives a translation of the Turkish circular.

[3] *Ibid.* xv. No. 520.

have not succeeded in obtaining from the Porte by persuasion. Our august master has resolved to undertake this work, which His Majesty had invited the Great Powers to pursue in common with him. He has given his armies the order to cross the frontiers of Turkey.—*Prince Gortschakoff's Circular*, $\frac{7}{19}$ April.[1]

On the same evening Lord Derby in the House of Lords said the Government had done all it was possible for any one to do to bring about an understanding, but they had unfortunately failed. He added he believed that they were engaged in the solution of an impossible problem. The next morning [2] the newspapers announced that the Russian troops were over the frontier, the Roumanian Government declaring that it yielded to force, and directing the Roumanian troops to fall back to avoid a conflict. The "paper extinguisher" had caught fire at last.[3] The possibilities of the "Police" policy were exhausted. The time had arrived when from the nature of the case it must merge into either "Isolation" or "Support." Which direction would the Cabinet give to the policy of England?

It was noticed that the clause which had appeared on the occasion of the Franco-German war, expressive of a fixed determination to take no part in the contest, was omitted in the English proclamation of neutrality.[5]

On May 1st, Lord Derby addressed a reply to the Russian circular announcing the Russian resolve to resort to coercion, a reply couched in a tone appropriate to an intention to carry out the Police policy to its logical conclusion, by a resort to war to support it. Lord Derby reprobated the Russian action as a breach of the public peace, and an outrage on European law.

Her Majesty's Government have received this communication with deep regret. They cannot accept the statements and conclusions with which Prince Gortchakow has accompanied it as justifying the resolution thus taken. [Refusing to admit that the answer of the Porte removed all hope of deference on its part to the wishes and advice of Europe, Her Majesty's Government

[1] *Turkey*, xviii. 1877, No. 1.

[2] April 25th.

[3] See *Punch* (April 28th):

Lord Derby.—Con-found the thing, it's all a-blaze!
Lord Beaconsfield.—Ah, my dear D., paper *will* burn, you know.

[4] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 175.

[5] *Extraordinary Gazette*, April 30th. The *D. T.* May 1st, and *Spec.* May 5th, notice the omission. The *D. T.* calls it an "important difference." Lord Derby, however, appears to have attached no significance to it. He telegraphs to the British representatives abroad, "It is similar to the proclamation in regard to the Franco-German war."—*Turkey*, xxv. 1877, No. 170.

could not agree in the view that the Emperor's step was in accordance with the sentiments and interests of Europe. They had regarded the presence of the Russian army on the frontier as a material obstacle to internal reform.] They cannot believe that the entrance of those armies on Turkish soil will alleviate the difficulty, or improve the condition of the Christian population throughout the Sultan's dominions. But the course on which the Russian Government has entered involves graver and more serious considerations. It is in contravention of the stipulation of the Treaty of Paris of March 30th, 1856, by which Russia and the other signatory Powers engaged, each on its own part, to respect the independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. . . . In taking action against Turkey on his own part, and having recourse to arms without further consultation with his allies, the Emperor of Russia has separated himself from the European concert hitherto maintained, and has at the same time departed from the rule to which he himself had solemnly recorded his consent. It is impossible to foresee the consequences of such an act. Her Majesty's Government . . . feel bound to state, in a manner equally formal and public, that the decision of the Russian Government is not one which can have their concurrence or approval.—[*Turkey*, xviii. 1877, No. 2.]

§ 4. *The Third Crisis of "War in the Air."*

The contents of Lord Derby's despatch of May 1st appeared in the newspapers of May 7th. Thus the public were enabled to mark how far the English Government had swung back even from the position they seemed to occupy at the opening of Parliament, to say nothing of the time of Lord Salisbury's mission.

Having at one time (at least so it seemed) gone well-nigh the whole length of the "violet" policy—falling short of it only by their unwillingness to undertake the business of enforcing the solution they had recognised as essential to the peace and comfort of Europe—and having seen too in Turkey's fear of Russia the greatest motive-power of the Conference, they had come, through Lord Derby's anxiety to maintain order, to a refusal to allow that the conduct of Turkey afforded legitimate grounds for applying coercion to her. And now, by a too easy transition, they were posing as the champions of her right to insist on her independence.

In conformity with this attitude, Lord Derby preferred an indictment charging Russia with having committed an outrage on the peace of the world. The legalistic theories of the independence of Turkey and of the Treaty of Paris were to the front once more.

The English Government seemed to have eluded the grasp of their anxious "employers" at home, and to have slipped back into that position which they occupied after the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum, when the dread of closely impending war awoke the country from its apathy.

Out of doors, the advocates of an active "red" policy were making themselves loudly heard, and were confidently identifying attacks on Turkey with attacks on British interests.[1]

Moreover, there was the shrewd suspicion, never entirely allayed, whatever the other members of the Cabinet might say, that the attitude of the "red" press was not displeasing to the Premier, and in fact, that it reflected his own. Mr. Carlyle gave expression to these misgivings of the intentions which rumour attributed to "our miraculous Premier."[2]

> If affairs take the untoward turn now too naturally expected, the protocol at once disappears, and with it all part and lot as regards Great Britain in the sanguinary Christianity of Kischeneff. In such a case we trust that the same wise and patriotic promptitude which despatched the British fleet to Besika Bay will order it instantly and unhesitatingly to the Bosphorus so soon as a single Russian battalion has crossed the Pruth.—*D. T.* April 13th.
>
> The oppression of Christians is not the governing reason which is impelling eight army corps towards the Bosphorus, and three upon Kars and Erzeroum. The cause of both movements is the same—a thirst for the possession of the Straits, which would enable Russia to contend with England in the Mediterranean, and reduce Asia Minor to a state of vassalage from the plains of Troy to the borders of Arabia. Yet we are called to stand idly by and witness the accomplishment of this gigantic plan, because our anger is roused by Turkish misrule, and because Russia falsely asserts that she is the right arm of Christian Europe! The bad advice cannot be obeyed. The Empire is assailed, and it must be defended.—*D. T.* April 26th.

The *Daily Telegraph* commences a leading article on April 28th with the assertion that it is the intention of the Russian Government, if favoured by fortune in the war, to occupy Constantinople.

[1] See *Punch*, May 12th, 1877:

> Justice, Humanity, may take their turn,
> When Peace comes back again and conflict closes.
> Meanwhile for battle all brave patriots burn,
> And valorous Betsy as Bellona poses.

The cartoon shows the *Daily Telegraph*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, and *Morning Post* trying to "poke up" the British lion with their quills. "Betsy" (*subauditur* "Prig") is the *Daily Telegraph*.

[2] Letter in *T.* May 5th.

It argues that no less object would account for the Russian war preparations. It then introduces the doctrine of limits, afterwards adopted by the Government.[1] If the *Telegraph* is to be regarded as inspired the date of this article is important, as going to show that the Government contemplated their policy of conditional neutrality at the time of the despatch of May 1st, a despatch which reads like the expression of an active "red" policy founded on "Legalism" or "Order."

> It is our deep conviction that the sole way in which England can escape the necessity of hereafter declaring war against Russia, and compelling her at all odds to leave the seas open and the commerce of Asia free, is to make up its mind to-day what shall be the limits of this invasion, and to stand prepared to have those limits respected. The country—or we mistake it—is thus prepared. . . . It is the idlest folly or the grossest ignorance to talk about there being plenty of time for the necessary preparations. There is no time to spare. . . . A patriotic and zealous Minister of War like Mr. Gathorne Hardy needs only one word to have the forces which might be wanted for some vitally important duty ready at a day's notice. If such a word, however, be not spoken long beforehand, the preparation of forty or fifty thousand troops would be a work of weeks, and so slight a delay might prove dangerous or even fatal.—*D. T.* April 28th.

Meanwhile the *Daily Telegraph* gives prominence to a few letters calling upon the English Government to take immediate military action, and we get the first hints of an attempted counter-agitation in favour of a war in defence of Turkey.

> Russia knows well that, beyond the half-disciplined, ill-organised armies of Turkey, she has to face the might and wealth and stern resolve of Britain. . . . The armed hosts of Russia are already marching forth to disturb the peace of the world. Every stage which they move is an advance towards the inevitable collision with England.—"*Anglophil*" in *D. T.* April 27th.

> The country should be moved to give expression to its feelings of indignation at the iniquitous conduct of Russia, in public meetings calling upon our Government to lose no time in taking the necessary steps to limit the advance of the ambitious autocrat.—*Dr. Phelps*[2] in *D. T.* April 30th.

> [Again, he acknowledges numerous letters of concurrence and sympathy :—] They are from all quarters, and from all classes, and confirm me—though confirmation was needless—in the conviction that the feeling of the country is that of indignation towards the authors and promoters of this most unjust and most unholy war. —*Dr. Phelps* in *D. T.* May 3rd.

[1] See Lord Derby's despatch of May 6th, *post*, § 6*a*, and Mr. Cross's speech in the five nights' debate, *post*, § 6*b*.

[2] Master of Sidney Sussex College.

The place where England should defend Constantinople is by concert with Austria and with the Turks in the open behind the Balkans, there to fall from a central position upon the Russian columns debouching from the passes—not when the Turks are annihilated as an army, alone, behind earthworks, on the Kara Sou. Even now it might not be too late if a great policy is followed and a great peril properly appreciated. . . . This is the time for the Cabinet to speak out; Lord Beaconsfield would have the whole nation with him now, would he call into his counsels a true soldier, and give him leave to act, ere it be too late. . . . It may well be that the Cabinet, occupied in watching the intrigues of its political opponents in Parliament, of Russian diplomatists abroad, has failed to read the impulse that is driving on the nation to arm in behalf of England's interests.—"*Anglophil*" in *D. T.* May 15th.

The *Spectator* notes that Lord Derby [1] praised the foreign correspondence of the *Daily Telegraph*; which has gone to the very brink of demanding an English war against Russia. We fear the time may be at hand when we would give a great deal to have him as Laodicean as he was at the time when a little earnestness would have prevented war.—(April 28th.)

The *Daily News* said the Government should speak out frankly, and set the mind of the country at rest. For it cannot be denied that the Government are unfortunate in some of their volunteer supporters. Every day the cry becomes more shrill and hysterical which would frighten the country into a war with Russia.—(April 28th.)

The fanatics who last autumn were anxious to lead us into a war for Turkey are doing everything they can now to impel us into a war against Russia. Their language sounds a little strange in the mouths of men who but a week ago were never weary of depicting the horrors of war. It is necessary that the opinion of the country should be again appealed to and enlightened by frank discussion. We are as keenly alive as they are to the importance of keeping the road to India open, whether by land or sea. We should not shrink upon honourable cause shown from any measures which may be necessary to attain this object. The policy is questionable of exactly defining the contingencies under which England is to draw the sword. Russia perfectly well knows that England must fight for her own hand in some circumstances.—(April 30th.)

Thus there came about a growing anxiety lest, after all, the country should be involved in war in defence of Turkey, an anxiety which culminated, it is hardly too much to say, in a third crisis of "War in the Air."

The debates in Parliament had not been calculated to satisfy the "violet" section of opinion out of doors. There is every reason

[1] Alluding to a remark in *H. of L.* April 24th.

to believe that the opinion in favour of an active "violet" policy was not so strong as it had been. In the eyes of many the golden opportunity had already been lost. When war had actually broken out, one great argument for the adoption of the "violet' policy was gone.

> At home—in Parliament, perhaps, more than in the country—the feeling is growing, we fear, less and less favourable to ultimate intervention. Partly it is because the doctrines of Mr. Cobden, coinciding with a better knowledge of our own ignorance of foreign countries and with a growing sense of the difficulty of home questions, and of the call they make on the whole of our best energies, have profoundly impressed the best minds in every political party. Mr. Cobden himself was a great statesman. He had a strong sense of the *solidarité* of Europe. And we venture to think he would have been one of the first to recognise that, notwithstanding the soundness of his general principle, an obligation lies on England to take part in such diplomatic action as might possibly lead to armed intervention.—*British Quarterly Review*, April 1877.

But allowing for all deductions, the opinion still was strong that England's true policy was to actively associate herself with Russia to enforce a proper settlement in favour of the Provincials.

Loud murmurs began to arise at the conduct of the Parliamentary Opposition. In the minds of many, if not most, Liberals, the "violet" policy was fast becoming the all-important party test question, a question in comparison with which all other matters were for the time unimportant.

Deserted as they were beginning to feel themselves by their parliamentary leaders they seemed to have even less means of making their opinions felt by the Executive than had been the case during the agitation of the autumn.

> The *Daily News* connected the result of the Salford election[1] with the remissness of the Opposition in the House. If they approved the "violet" policy, they ought to have said so plainly. Their declaration might have had no effect in the present Parliament, but it would have been an unmistakable indication to the Liberal party in the constituencies of what their leaders would do if they were in power. So long as no such indication is given, how is it possible that there should be any Opposition enthusiasm out of doors?—(April 23rd.)
>
> [The Autumn Agitation had two objects. It meant that under no circumstances should England fight for Turkey, and that the condition of the Provincials should be improved.] The former

[1] Salford election, where the Conservative candidate, Colonel Walker, was returned (April 19th) by a larger majority than the Conservatives had polled in 1874 or 1868

object had been accomplished, but what had been done to secure the second? . . . .The present Government were making believe in favour of a peace which was worse than war . . . . and they as a Liberal party could do nothing because there was no alternative they could propose with any hope of agreement. He did not believe with those of the Liberal party who were in favour of peace at any price. . . . There were other Liberals who would submit to any outrage because the Poles had been sent to Siberia, and there were others who distrusted the Greek Church; so that the Liberal party remained powerless in the face of a Government which he believed was dragging the name and the honour of England in the dirt. The independent members of the party were told they must sink their minor differences in order that they should be united. If they did so they would have to throw overboard a whole cargo of measures. . . . Then, when they had sunk everything for which they cared two farthings, then, forsooth, they might unite on the second reading of the Colonial Marriages Bill, or an order to refer to a Select Committee a Bill for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments.—*Mr. Chamberlain.*[1]

[Why should any one rejoice at the reviving prospects of the party, if the Liberal salt has lost its savour?] It is hardly possible to imagine a more contemptible part than the part which the Liberals have played from February 8th onwards. . . . There was a time, at the beginning of the Session, when the Government were plainly hesitating what course they should take. [A section of the Cabinet used language plainly pointing] to the maintenance of the European concert to obtain, not the signature of an empty protocol, but the introduction of fairly effective reforms into the status of the Christians of Turkey. . . . The true policy of the Opposition was to give them some indication of the support which they might look for in Parliament and the country, in the event of their breaking with their colleagues. But such a course as this might have done nothing to advance the return of the Liberal party to power, and with some who call themselves Liberals this is the only end which it is worth taking trouble to attain. . . . The blame of this miserable collapse must be divided between the leaders and the rank and file. . . . We will concede that in the present condition of the party, it is more than probable that such a course [setting up the Liberal standard] would have led to a conspicuous defeat. The peace-at-any-price-Liberals, the anti-Russian Liberals, the Liberals who think Mahometanism a religion for men, while Christianity—at all events, Greek Christianity—is a religion for women, might all have deserted Lord Hartington, and gone into the lobby in support of an amendment leaving everything to the discretion of Ministers. But in that

[1] At a *soirée* of the Birmingham Liberal Association (see *D. N.* April 10th). He went on to allude to the prospects of the formation of Liberal Associations, and out of them a federation which might combine their action on fixed principles of general application, so that Liberalism might no longer mean one thing in Birmingham and something quite different in Liverpool and Bristol. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 22.

case, the end would not have been yet. Behind Parliament lies the country.

[Even allowing Mr. Chamberlain's assumption (with which the writer does not agree) that his list constitutes the essentials of a Liberal policy, all these questions are as nothing to the Eastern Question.] To insist upon the party pledging itself to a long series of domestic revolutions, none of which are likely to present themselves for serious discussion until after the present troubles in the East have been disposed of, is to throw needless, and probably fatal, obstacles in the way of the formation of a solid body of Liberal opinion on this question of questions. For the present, the test of Liberalism should be the maintenance of Liberal ideas in foreign policy. That is an end for which it is worth while to throw the rest of the cargo overboard.—*Spec.* April 14th.

[In the last week the Government have given three indications of rapid drifting in the wrong direction.] They have held up Russia to blame for the very attitude which a few months ago they admitted to be the principal leverage on which they had relied for bringing about a better condition of things in Turkey. They have depreciated and minimised the meaning of that outburst of British conviction which a few months ago led them to change their policy. . . . And they have reverted to that magniloquent and somewhat braggadocio tone concerning British "interests" which is a kind of threat in itself, and too often the prelude to menaces which can be met only by defiance, and thence lead by short and easy stages into war.—*Spec.* April 21st.

[The point the Great Powers will have to consider is] not how the Ottoman Empire may be saved, but how to make the best arrangements for defeating the possible ill consequences of its fall. . . . There is a section of the Conservative party which will be exceedingly anxious to push the Ministry into acts which may be construed as, and may ultimately have the effect of, intervention on behalf of Turkey. [They would not be called by that name—but they may easily mean the same thing. Thus the sole remaining benefit of the autumn agitation would be lost. The division and timidity of the Opposition have prevented any other benefit from it. But supposing Russia now to intend to occupy Constantinople, and the Government to believe this would be prejudicial to our interests, they would be bound to prevent it.] It might be the business of England, in the case supposed, to hold Constantinople as the trustee of Europe. It might conceivably be right to seize Constantinople for her own possession. But under no circumstances would it be right for her to hold it in order to give it back to the Turk. . . . The same thing may be said of what is perhaps the more probable contingency of its being thought necessary to occupy Egypt or Crete. We have no objection to either step if it should appear that English interests require it. But then it must be made clear that the occupation is not to end in presenting the territory again to the Turk.—*D. N.* April 18th.

On April 27th it was announced in the *Daily News* that it had been decided by the Liberal members that at present no motion was to be brought forward in the House of Commons. At a recent meeting the terms of a resolution were submitted, but the members who were responsible for it had determined to subordinate their own judgment to the general feeling of the party.

> The most just and necessary war of our time has commenced. The Mahometan papers miss the point in their attacks on the leaders of Opposition. Their speeches during the Recess helped to prevent war on behalf of Turkey, not to hasten it, and were of the very highest service, not only to the cause of humanity, but to that of peace,—causes which are not invariably identical. But it is quite true that the responsibility for the great war which has commenced, and the much greater one into which, as we believe, Lord Beaconsfield may succeed in plunging us, rests in a great degree upon their shoulders. Their timidity, their want of frank confidence in the people, their over-strained respect for one or two powerful colleagues, has assisted materially to bring affairs into their present most threatening position. . . . There are thousands of men in England at this moment, each of them able to influence a county, a borough, a ward, or a circle, fretting their hearts out at the idea of war with Russia to the advantage of Turkey, ready to start into furious action, if only they could obtain guidance, but utterly bewildered and paralysed by the want of definiteness, the political timidity of their natural chiefs. . . . Of all who spoke at St. James's Hall, not one has a word to utter now, and probably not one has altered his opinion. And the Opposition Cabinet has given them no help, has put out no programme, has made no speeches from which the most careful watchfulness can extract one grain of solid purpose. We do not believe such a situation ever occurred in English politics before. Here are half, or a third, or a tenth, if you will, of this great nation strongly opposed to a war visibly drawing nearer, ready to resist it almost by any means, and the leaders, who are equally anxious and equally resolved, have never even placed their views beyond suspicion. . . . We shall be told, of course, that it is the fault of the men, and not of the officers. . . . Had Lord Hartington condemned the Government for the protracted action which has resulted in war, he would not, it is said, have had on the division 150 followers. Suppose he had not had fifteen? [The point for leaders of a minority] is to be sure that the country understands them, that the ultimate tribunal has heard and comprehended their side, before it gives the decision which immediately precedes action. And yet, though permission to plead it has been twice asked, the cause has never been pleaded.—*Spec.* April 28th.

§ 5. *The Second Agitation and Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions.*

The utter abandonment by the English Government of any semblance of the Emancipation policy, and the alarming symptoms of a recurrence of the ascendency in their counsels of the policy of Support, brought about a renewal of the agitation. We notice that the appeal to out-of-door opinion to assert itself came from two quarters. On the same day[1] the *Daily News* published an address of the Eastern Question Association, and reported a meeting of the executive council of the Workmen's Peace Association, at which an address in favour of absolute neutrality was drawn up.

> It was decided to invite a large number of representative working men to sign it, that it should be placarded throughout the country, and issued to every organised body of working men in the United Kingdom. The address strenuously urges working men not to allow themselves to be cajoled into sanctioning any interference in the war by this country. The secretary, Mr. Cremer, was also instructed to immediately invite the co-operation of the 400 branches committees, and agents which the association has in different parts of the country.—*D. N.* April 30th.

> The Central Committee of the Eastern Question Association is called upon, in the present crisis, to communicate with the numerous subscribers and supporters of the Association throughout the country. . . . The Association has derived much advantage from the support of large towns. The Central Committee earnestly recommend, and will be glad to promote, the formation of local committees in those places where such action has not already been taken, and will be ready to assist in the necessary work of organisation. [The Association appeals] especially for the active co-operation of its supporters, in combating mischievous tendencies which the imminent outbreak of war between Russia and Turkey is likely to stimulate.—*D. N.* April 30th.

These two appeals are typical of the two aspects of the agitation answering respectively to the dissatisfaction caused by the abandonment of the "violet" policy, and the alarm caused by the tendency towards the "red." Both sections of those who were now stirring felt the alarm; but the dissatisfaction was not so widespread. The Eastern Question Association appealed to both sentiments. Thus in the murmurs which the course of the Government was provoking we catch a divided sound; there was the cry which was raised for adoption of a real Emancipation policy, and there was the cry for simple neutrality.

[1] April 30th.

Perchance indeed, now that Russia had stepped forward alone by reason of our own slackness at an earlier stage, the work of extorting the necessary concessions from Turkey was in the way of being accomplished without any active participation on the part of this country. Russia having commenced a war, neutrality was, perhaps, in the view of not a few adherents of the Emancipation policy, the best course that now remained possible.

The attitude of the loudest supporters of the Government, however, showed only too plainly how easily so-called neutrality might slide into a position of hostility, and eventually of war with Russia, if the neutrality of England was not to be based on an approval of the object which was the avowed occasion of Russia's action, and a determination that that object should eventually be attained.

Thus the period of the session which follows the disappointment of the Parade Debates, is marked by a second outburst of acute agitation. The old symptoms reappeared.[1] Meetings all over the country crowded thickly one upon another. In some places (the metropolis for instance) handbills were posted on the walls deprecating, on the one hand, unjust war, and on the other hand calling on people to remember Poland. If this second agitation appears not to be so intense as the agitation of September, it must be remembered, that owing to the speedy issue of the debate on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, it was not so protracted.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Gladstone stepped forward as the representative of the great stream of opinion which had found no adequate expression through the official leaders of the Opposition, and announced his intention to move a series of resolutions in the House of Commons. These resolutions comprised a process of two steps.

The first two of them negatived the policy of "Support," and the last three affirmed the policy of "Emancipation."

> The Liberal party in the country, discouraged and perplexed by the silence or ineffectual speech of its leaders in Parliament, will heartily welcome the notice of motion which Mr. Charles Howard gave yesterday on behalf of Mr. Gladstone. [The nation is not reduced to such a condition of abject perplexity on the Eastern Question that they are content, like a rider who has missed his

[1] The notices and reports of meetings and other proceedings connected with the Agitation occupy a column and a half in the *Daily News* of May 3rd, and two or three columns on each of the following days to May 7th.

way, to throw the reins on the horse's neck.] Mr. Gladstone and those who think with him have very clear ideas on the subject, but we are by no means satisfied that the minds of the Government are equally clear. [The writer insists on two points. (1) The Eastern Question, having been rudely reopened, ought to be disposed of once for all. (2)] The English Government are not to be deluded into any support of Turkey, moral, material, or otherwise, by the idle, and, we are forced to add, the shameful talk that if we do not wound Russia now she may be able to wound us hereafter.—*D. N.* April 28th.

A letter from Mr. Gladstone was read at a meeting held at Greenwich, in which he calls upon Public Opinion once more to assert itself. Mr. Gladstone wrote:—

> The opponents of the cause of freedom in the East persistently allege that the people of this country eight months ago were beguiled by designing persons (among whom I am usually promoted to a front place) into a violent agitation against Turkish outrage; but they had long ago repented, and were ashamed of their error, and are now prepared contentedly to acquiesce in the continuance of what they then denounced, rather than run the risk of disturbing either the integrity or the independence of the Ottoman Empire. In my view this statement is nothing less than an insult to the nation. But, daringly and incessantly repeated, it has not been without its effect, especially in the metropolis, upon persons of undecided mind and character, and it is high time that it should either be confirmed or exploded by authentic evidence. I have done all in my power to give the country to understand that it is thus challenged in point of consistency, common sense, and manhood. . . . [If the] British people are content to 'drift' on [this question], be it so, for I know no other tribunal of appeal; but I for one will not accept in silence at such a crisis the very smallest share in so great a responsibility.—*Report* in *D. N.* May 4th.

In coming forward as he had done, Mr. Gladstone had acted independently of the recognised leaders of the Opposition, and it seemed possible that his action might cause a serious schism in the ranks of the Parliamentary Liberal party.[1]

In response to an invitation to preside at a meeting at York, held in support of Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, the Liberal member, Mr. Leeman, telegraphed:—

> Cannot leave London. Very divided opinion among Liberal members on inopportuneness and ambiguity of resolutions. I will support nothing which may endanger our absolute neutrality.—*Report* in *D. T.* May 5th.

[1] See *ante*, p. 49.

But out of doors Mr. Gladstone was regarded as the exponent of the policy which the Liberal party, at all events, if not the nation at large, had definitely adopted in relation to the Eastern Question.

> It seems to me eminently desirable that the occupants of the front Opposition bench, before committing themselves to a false move, which, while disastrous to their party for the present, may ultimately prove fatal to their own political prospects, should clearly understand the views of the Liberal party in the country. The widespread agreement, approaching to unanimity, in relation to Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, which prevails among robust Liberals outside Parliament is in remarkable contrast with the uncertainty and division of which we hear as existing within. . . . It is said that the friends of the Peace Society hold back from Mr. Gladstone. I should have thought that their principles would rather incline them to support him, especially as the Society was represented, if I remember rightly, at the Conference, and contributed towards the expenses. But there is a personal question as well as one of policy involved in this matter, and the announcement, first whispered as a rumour, and afterwards authoritatively stated in your columns, that Mr. Gladstone's late colleagues are about to forsake him, has awakened a feeling of indignation which, I fancy, these gentlemen hardly appreciate. . . . The party, and especially those on whom the stress of electoral conflicts mainly falls, will not easily condone the desertion of him in such a crisis as this.—*Rev. J. Guinness Rogers* in *D. N.* May 5th.

> The Eastern Question yesterday found its way into the discussions of the Liberation Society. The unanimity of a body of influential and representative men assembled on another business has a special significance. The irregularity of the proceeding is a strong testimony to the warmth of feeling and the strength of conviction out of which it came . . . The whole agitation which Mr. Gladstone now so strenuously and eloquently represents, began, and was continued, in the cause of peace in the East, through the better government of the Christian populations of Turkey.—*D. N.* May 4th.

The first step which Mr. Gladstone invited the House to take was one in which the advocates of an active "violet" policy might go hand in hand with the advocates of Isolation. These last, however, would be likely to part company on reaching the second step.

While there was a disposition in some quarters to hesitate about affirming the second branch of Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, on the ground that it endangered our neutrality, in many instances no such difficulty was felt, and resolutions in support of Mr. Gladstone's proposals and of neutrality were often passed at the same meeting.

Moreover, the great stream of "violet" opinion out of doors still set strongly; but the extra-Parliamentary agitation, which was now on foot again, was before all things the expression of the determined hostility of Public Opinion to any course which might lead to the policy of Support.

The great bulk of opinion out of doors was again rendered uneasy and distrustful by the symptoms of pro-Turkish leanings on the part of the Government. It recognised instinctively that the policy to which Mr. Gladstone pointed was the policy most likely to keep England from the serious war it dreaded for the cause it abhorred. It had been chafing at the inaction of the Liberal leaders, and now it had got a spokesman in the House at last. Thus the main body of the agitation which had sprung up laid itself out to strengthen Mr. Gladstone's hands.[1]

Meanwhile the *Times* asks:—

> Does Mr. Gladstone's fourth resolution mean that the Powers should summon Turkey to submit to their will and destroy her fleet if she refuse? The final demands of the Conference are too small to be worth such a price;—coercion if resorted to at all should have a worthy object;—but the country has made up its mind not to risk another Navarino for any object whatever.—(May 1st.)

[1] Some of the meetings insisted principally on neutrality; others (*e.g. Gloucester*) expressed the hope that Mr. Gladstone would not be deterred by indifferentism and contumely from sustained effort on behalf of the Christians in Turkey.

At *Manchester* (*D. N.* May 5th) the Liberal Association voted in favour of absolute neutrality, and of Mr. Gladstone's resolutions; while at *Newcastle-on-Tyne* (*D. N.* May 5th) a resolution approving neutrality was carried unanimously, but a further resolution approving Mr. Gladstone's resolutions was opposed on the ground that as the meeting had unanimously approved of neutrality, it could not vote for Mr. Gladstone's resolutions. The meeting became very noisy, but an amendment was ultimately put to the meeting and rejected, and the original motion carried in favour of Mr. Gladstone's resolutions.

The Workmen's Peace Association (*D. N.* May 7th) resolved that the principles of Mr. Gladstone's resolutions were calculated to keep the country out of war.

A meeting of labourers, held at *Warrington* (*D. N.* May 7th), and addressed by Mr. Arch and others, condemned the dangerous vacillation of the Government, and urged them to support neither Russia nor Turkey.

At *Warrington* (*D. N.* May 7th) and *Wellingborough* (*D. N.* May 7th) meetings of Liberals were held, at which Mr. Gladstone was spoken of as representing the Liberal feeling of the country, and the action of those Liberal members who refused to support his resolutions was repudiated.

At *Sheffield* (*D. N.* May 7th) a Conservative meeting regretted the attempt of Mr. Gladstone and a small section of the Liberal party to embarrass the Government.

At *Liverpool* (*D. N.* May 7th) the Peace Society expressed confidence that Lord Derby would not allow the country to be inveigled into war against Russia, and in another resolution urged the Government to adopt Mr. Gladstone's resolutions.

Subsequently to the defeat of Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, it was declared at a great meeting of agricultural labourers in favour of household suffrage in counties, held at Exeter Hall, May 16th, that the vote of the House of Commons did not express the feeling of the country. The predominating feeling of the agricultural labourers appears to have been simply against a war on behalf of Turkey.

The *Standard* wishes to know whether Mr. Gladstone's followers are seriously prepared to advocate war, *not* on behalf of British interests, but on behalf of what they suppose to be humanity.—(May 1st.)

Some verbal amendments to the resolutions of little importance were proposed. Among them was one, noteworthy perhaps as emanating from a member who after all voted with the Government, by Mr. Forsyth, who wished to "obtain" instead of to "exact" reforms from Turkey.

But other amendments of greater importance were proposed. At this juncture, the official leaders of the Opposition refused to go a mile with Mr. Gladstone unless he engaged not to ask them to go twain. Sir John Lubbock from the Liberal side had already given notice of the previous question. This course was seen with deep discouragement.

The *Daily News* says Sir John Lubbock makes a great mistake if he fancies Liberalism is prepared even for such a negative confidence in the policy of Lord Beaconsfield. The writer alludes to demonstrations in Birmingham and other great towns in support of Mr. Gladstone's resolutions.—(May 4th.)

[The first consequence of Mr. Gladstone's action has been to compel the members of the front Opposition bench to define their attitude.] Mr. Gladstone's resolutions were considered yesterday in a meeting of the members of the late Cabinet, held at Lord Granville's, when it was resolved not to sustain them in the House of Commons, but to support Sir John Lubbock's amendment. [Liberals throughout the country] will want to know what is the political meaning of the separation of the members of the late Cabinet from their head at such a crisis as this. The leaders of the Liberal Opposition are on their trial, or rather the trial which has been going on since the opening of this Session, is approaching its conclusion. . . . Mr. Gladstone will appeal, as he has always done, to the country. We shall see to whom his late colleagues will appeal. . . . It must never be forgotten that Mr. Gladstone's proposals concerning Turkey from the commencement of the crisis have had peace for their object. He wrote and spoke to prevent a general scramble for the territories which Turkey is unable to rule.—*D. N.* May 3rd.

Mr. Gladstone has at last taken up a line of his own on the Eastern Question and we have to record, with deep regret and something like indignation, that on that line he is not—it is stated—to be supported but opposed by the front Opposition bench. Yet the defect of his resolutions is not due to their trenchancy but to their caution. . . . Sir John Lubbock and the miscalled leaders of Opposition—call them rather obstructors of Opposition—who are giving him their support, are making a fatal mistake—*Spec.* May 5th.

The debate on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions began on Monday May 7th. But there was a great disappointment in store. Members who earnestly believed in the expediency of the "violet" policy were not to have an opportunity of putting their votes in favour of it upon record after all. Mr. Gladstone had come to an arrangement with the official leaders of the party in accordance with which he did not proceed with his resolutions of the second branch, while they found no difficulty in supporting those of the first when they stood by themselves.

The announcement was made by Mr. Gladstone amidst jeers and laughter from the Ministerial side of the House, while below the gangway on the other side murmurs were heard that a mine had been sprung upon the independent Liberals.[1]

Sir John Lubbock announced with the concurrence of the Marquis of Hartington that the state of the case being entirely altered he would give Mr. Gladstone's remaining resolutions his most cordial support, and that he should not move the previous question.

A somewhat confused re-arrangement of the programme took place, which Mr. Gladstone discussed in a letter addressed to Mr. Howard which appeared in the *Daily News* of May 9th.

> [Sir H. Wolff applied "the previous question"—a method of avoiding a vote—both to] my first resolutions, and to my proposal of an alternative policy; and to this motion the Government on Friday evening gave its adhesion.
>
> I had made up my mind, in remembrance of the tactics recently attempted against Mr. Fawcett's motion, that when a positive issue was thus evaded, and when I had obtained my first, which would also be my best, division on the first resolution, I ought not to incur the risk of forced and worse divisions on the others, by asking the Speaker to put them from the chair; acting thus upon a discretion which belonged to me, and which I apprehend is frequently so used.
>
> Had the Government adhered to what I believe to be Parliamentary usage, and allowed a positive issue to be raised, then indeed I might not have come to this conclusion at all, and certainly not without consultation. But they had on Friday refused to allow free discussion on my alternative policy, and declared their course. After Friday I found that by making or by acceding to a change, in my view far from detrimental, in the second resolution, and by announcing before the debate, and thus binding myself to, the conclusion I had already formed as to resolutions 3—5, I should obtain the support of many valued

[1] *D. N.* May 8th.

friends in the division, I did not hesitate to agree; and I answered yesterday accordingly the question of Mr. Trevelyan, so as to liberate those friends wholly from all responsibility with regard to the later resolutions, and without the smallest change on my own part in regard to them.

Hereupon the Government, which had refused to join issues with me on my "alternative policy," recommended Sir H. Wolff to alter his course and to move an amendment on the first resolution to the effect that the House would not entertain such a resolution in the absence of an alternative policy.

This was surprising. But Sir Henry Wolff rose after me, by a precedence which he only enjoyed in virtue of his announced intention to move the previous question. But for this intention it belonged to Lord Elcho, who had priority for his amendment upon the merits. This precedence, however, was employed by Sir H. Wolff not to move the previous question, but irregularly (as I conceive) to set aside the motion, I may say the valiant motion, of Lord Elcho. This was more surprising. But Lord Elcho, with his valiant motion, who had been active in the earlier part of the evening, acquiesced without remonstrance in this unceremonious method of setting aside his vigorous policy, which he must naturally have been very desirous to bring before the House.—*Mr. Gladstone's Letter* in *D. N.* May 9th.

It is not without significance in relation to the attitude of the Peace Party on the question of the policies to notice that the decision of the leaders of the Opposition is attributed to Mr. John Bright.

The purport and spirit of the resolutions are in entire acordance with the agreement come to by the members of the late Cabinet the day before the opening of the Session. . . . The clear purpose of the resolutions appears to us to be in distinct accordance with the policy on which the late Cabinet agreed at the opening of Parliament. On the 7th of February, as we next day informed our readers, a meeting was held at Lord Granville's residence at Carlton House Terrace, which, with the exception of Mr. Bright, who was then at Mentone, was attended by the members of Mr. Gladstone's late Cabinet, and by Sir Henry James and Sir William Harcourt, the law advisers of the late Government. . . . The difference between the decisions of Mr. Gladstone's late colleagues assembled in conference on the 7th of February and re-assembled on the 2nd May, is attributable to a single fact, which our columns on both occasions recorded. Mr. Bright, who was absent from the deliberations of February, took part in those of May. Honourably consistent himself, he has persuaded his colleagues into a lamentable inconsistency and self-contradiction. His objection, which is founded on what are called peace principles, is entitled to every respect. The man who declares himself always opposed to interference of any kind in the

affairs of other States, because he observes that intervention by pressure of counsel and influence generally leads to intervention by arms, is at least faithful to his creed when he declines to support Mr. Gladstone's resolutions.—*D. N.* May 5th.

Mr. Gladstone's course no doubt signifies that he thought it more important as matters stood to secure as strong as possible a parliamentary protest against the "red" policy than to secure a parliamentary formulation of the "violet." There were many Liberals in the House and out of it who did not share this view. The *Daily News*[1] speaks of the disappointment displayed in the House of Commons on hearing from Mr. Gladstone that he abandoned the second branch of his resolutions.

A meeting, called by the Eastern Question Association, in support of Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, and to *protest* against any action of the Government the effect of which would be the maintenance of Turkish tyranny in Eastern Europe, was being held in St. James's Hall while the debate was commencing in the House of Commons. The *Times*[2] described it as a great and excited one. But when the course of the proceedings in Parliament became known, the heart seemed to be taken out of the agitation, a momentary feeling of despondency set in, and a sense of the impossibility of continuing the struggle.

The actual debate on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions beginning on Monday, May 7th, was continued for five nights. This Five Nights' debate forms a conspicuous landmark. It closes a period of struggle between the opposing policies, and marks the commencement of a long truce.

When Mr. Gladstone abandoned the latter branch of his resolutions, the "violet" policy, for the time being, passed out of the range of practical politics. Still his speech was a powerful plea for the adoption of that line of policy, if ever the lost opportunity should return.

We cannot persuade ourselves that Mr. Gladstone was justified in yielding to the pressure put upon him to conceal the number of thorough-going Liberals in return for a united vote on the question of neutrality. . . . We entirely appreciate both the stand which Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Dillwyn, and Mr. Chamberlain and their friends made in favour of this division, and the good humour with which, when the error—if it was an error—had been once made, and the magnificent speech in which their policy was vindicated had been delivered, they passed over the error, and

[1] May 8th. [2] May 8th.

cordially supported the great leader who had seemed to throw them over. . . . It is desirable that the country should know who the Liberals are who have the courage to co-operate with Russia rather than endure a return to the intolerable evils of the old situation, but it is not so important as that Mr. Gladstone's policy, as set forth in the wonderful speech which he delivered on Monday, should go forth to the country with all the signs of cordial support and adherence which those who agree with him are able to give.—*Spec.* May 12th.

§ 6. *The Charter of English Neutrality.*

a. The Despatch of May 6th.—Lord Derby's despatch of May 1st[1] redolent of a "red" policy founded on treaty legalism, which was published on the eve of the debate, was, when the debate began, the last indication of the position of the Government; but in fact they had already taken a new departure. They had abandoned treaty legalism, and had fallen back on a policy which may be described as Isolation qualified by British Interests.

The change of attitude is marked by Lord Derby's despatch to Count Schouvaloff, which is dated on the very day before Mr. Gladstone's debate began—Sunday, May 6th.

Lord Derby said he did not propose further to discuss the question of the justice of the war. As long as Turkish interests alone were involved Turkey would have no assistance from the English Government. But they thought it right that there should be no misunderstanding as to their position and intentions.

Should the war now in progress unfortunately spread, interests may be imperilled which they are equally bound and determined to defend, and it is desirable that they should make it clear, so far as at the outset of the war can be done, what the most prominent of those interests are. Foremost among them is the necessity of keeping open, uninjured and uninterrupted, the communication between Europe and the East by the Suez Canal. An attempt to blockade or otherwise to interfere with the Canal or its approaches would be regarded by them as a menace to India and as a grave injury to the commerce of the world. On both these grounds any such step—which they hope and fully believe there is no intention on the part of either belligerent to take—would be inconsistent with the maintenance by them of an attitude of passive neutrality. The mercantile and financial interests of European nations are also so largely involved in Egypt that an attack on that country or its occupation, even temporary, for purposes of war, could

[1] *Ante*, p. 182.

scarcely be regarded with unconcern by the neutral Powers, certainly not by England. The vast importance of Constantinople whether in a military, a political, or a commercial point of view, is too well understood to require explanation. It is therefore scarcely necessary to point out that Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to witness with indifference the passing into other hands than those of its present possessors of a capital holding so peculiar and commanding a position. The existing arrangements, made under European sanction, which regulate the navigation of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, appear to them wise and salutary, and there would be, in their judgment, serious objections to their alteration in any material particular. [The course of events might show there were other interests, as, for instance, in the Persian Gulf, which it would be their duty to protect. Their desire is to make their policy understood at the outset of the war] and thus to respond to the assurances given by his Imperial Majesty at Livadia,[1] and published at your Excellency's request, when he pledged his word of honour that he had no intention of acquiring Constantinople, and that, if necessity should oblige him to occupy a portion of Bulgaria, it would only be provisionally, and until the peace and safety of the Christian population were secured.—*Derby to Schouvaloff*, May 6th. (*Russia*, II. 1877.)

Lord Derby's despatch of May 6th, and the policy embodied in it, now became, as it was phrased, the "Charter of English Neutrality."[2]

b. The Five Nights' debate.—This policy it was which Mr. Cross on the night after the despatch was written expounded in the House of Commons in reply to Mr. Gladstone. Thus Mr. Cross's speech, made on the opening night, was in one sense the most important speech made in the course of the Five Nights' debate. In its sedative effect, in the way in which it put an end to a period of "War in the Air," it resembles Lord Derby's speeches to the deputation of July 12th in the preceding year.[3]

Mr. Cross began by saying that Mr. Gladstone shirked the real question—*Will* you go to war?

That is the one thing which you dare not put to the country and to this House. Are you prepared to go to war against Turkey as an ally of Russia?—*Mr. Cross.*

[1] *Ante*, p. 87.

[2] Later, Lord Beaconsfield applied somewhat similar phraseology to the alternative policy of Treaty Legalism. Citing the passage in the despatch of May 1st, in which Lord Derby objected that Russia was acting in contravention of the Treaty of Paris, Lord Beaconsfield said:—"My lords, that extract which I have read conveys the key-note of our policy. It is, I may say, the diapason of our diplomacy."—*H. of L.* April 8th, 1878. *Post.* chap. xviii.

[3] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 347.

He went on to say that the English policy was one of absolute and strict neutrality, qualified only by the necessity of guarding certain British Interests, and he then proceeded to recapitulate Lord Derby's specification of the four British Interests in question, viz: The Suez Canal, Egypt, Constantinople, and the Rule of the Straits, with a reference to possible further interests, as for instance, in the Persian Gulf, if the war should extend.

As the debate went on, a change of tone was remarked, which was taken to signify that the Cabinet, although they refused to agree to a motion expressing as much in terms, did in effect repudiate the "red" policy. Thus practically the result of the debate was to mark the abandonment for the time being of the idea of active interference on behalf of the Provincials on the one side or of Turkey on the other. Russia and Turkey were to be left face to face to fight the battle out, and England was to look on and await the course of events.

Besides Mr. Gladstone's and Mr. Cross's, the following speeches in the Five Nights' debate may be noted.[1]

May 8th.—*Mr. Baxter* was opposed to coercion in any form; and to our being entangled in any engagements to Turkey.

May 10th.—*Mr. Courtney* regretted the withdrawal of the third and fourth resolutions. He expressed his belief that the preponderating opinion in the country was for securing justice in alliance with the Czar.

Mr. Chaplin thought our neutrality should be armed, and that we should rest firm in the determination to keep Russia out of Constantinople.

Mr. Jacob Bright dissented from the resolutions because they proclaimed the doctrine of intervention.

Mr. Forsyth agreed with the first two resolutions, but would vote for the amendment in order not to embarrass the Government.

Mr. Forster expressed his belief that the course of the debate had been such as to render it much more difficult for the country to drift into war than had been the case at the beginning of the week.

May 11th.—*Mr. Anderson* complained that opinion in the House had not been fairly represented in the debate, so few supporters of Mr. Gladstone's resolutions in their entirety having spoken.

Mr. Goschen expressed his strong satisfaction at the less bellicose tone which had manifested itself on the ministerial side as the debate proceeded.

May 14th.—*Sir William Harcourt* explained that he would, at

[1] See article by Mr. Grant Duff, "The Five Nights' Debate," 19*th Cent.* July, 1877.

one time, have approved of a plan of coercion with defined object and limited scope.

Lord Hartington:—If for the security of our Indian Empire it be necessary that we should fight against the forces of nature and the laws of human progress, then I say we have undertaken a task too great. The Turkish dominion is the lifeless trunk; the subject nationalities are the living tree—and to-night the House is asked to assert that with them, and not with a sad and shameful past, the destinies of our Empire shall be associated.—*H. of C.* May 8th–14th.

Mr. Bright did not speak in the course of this debate.

The *Birmingham Post* states that Mr. Bright, replying to a gentleman at Leigh, who had expressed regret at his declining to support Mr. Gladstone's five resolutions on the Eastern Question, and stating that the nature of his views thereon were to many a matter of great interest, says:—"There are times when much might be said, when, notwithstanding, it may be wise to be silent. Whether I was wise to remain silent during the recent debate I must be allowed to be the most competent judge. I am sorry not to be able to send you a more satisfactory reply."—*D. N.* May 22nd.

The division was taken on the early morning of May 15th; 223 members supported Mr. Gladstone's first resolution, and 354 voted for the amendment moved by Sir H. D. Wolff.

Although the House had refused by such a large majority to negative the "red" policy in terms, still the result of the debate as a whole was regarded with some satisfaction by the "violet" party. They were relieved from the immediate prospect of a declaration of war with Russia, which once more had seemed imminent. The malign influence in the Cabinet attributed to Lord Beaconsfield, which would go all lengths for the "red" policy, appeared once more to be in abeyance.

The Government itself appeared to be holding back the eager advocates of war with Russia. In all this there was some reason for satisfaction. On the other hand, they could not but feel that a great opportunity had been lost, and by no means admitted that the result in the House of Commons accurately reflected the feeling out of doors.

As the debate goes on from night to night in the House of Commons, the discrepancy begins to grow more and more apparent between the grounds on which the Government claim the support of the country and those on which eager champions of Ministerial policy profess to give their support to the Government. [We are struck by the] discrepancy between the morbid horror of the

coercion which might have been regarded by some as the necessary result of the policy indicated by Mr. Courtney, and the eagerness exhibited by Mr. Chaplin, and loudly cheered on the Conservative benches, for a prompt preparation for war against Russia.—*D. N.* May 11th.

During the debate the utterances of the dominant party and especially of the representatives of the Government, became daily more moderate and pacific. The Home Rulers as a body, two or three Jewish members, the Marquis of Lorne—a most significant vote—and a few members of "City" opinion deserted the Liberals. . . . The vote has done mischief on the Continent . . . but it is quite understood at home that it was secured by a promise of neutrality for the present. The Government is pledged up to the lips not to fight unless "The route to India" is threatened, and the route to India was defined by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as the route through Egypt. "The independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire" was never mentioned in the debate by any responsible speaker, and has become a purely historical phrase. . . . The danger of war is not over; never can be over while Lord Beaconsfield holds the reins of power and Orientals remain in Europe, but the danger of war for Turkey which was imminent and burning is now and for the present at an end. The English people have not yet grasped the situation. They do not yet see how shamefully they are evading their responsibility for the Christians of the East . . . But they have recognised one danger, have recoiled from the tempter who would have persuaded them to interfere by arms on behalf of the debasement of mankind. It was not for war, but for neutrality, that the House of Commons pronounced on Monday by the largest majority of our time.—*Spec.* May 19th.

The unwonted tone manifested by the satirical paper *Punch*, in a passage closing the weekly summary of the debates—a summary usually couched in comic vein, but in this instance written in all seriousness—is significant of the intense feeling which had been aroused.

The bolder spirits . . . found voice by Chamberlain and Courtney to express their regret at the compromise. But if their leader consented to waive a vote on his third and fourth resolutions, he did not, happily for England and the House, waive his speech in their support. . . . We have heard the boldest, most logical, and as *Punch* believes, in the long run, wisest, and most clear-sighted English policy on the Eastern Question propounded and maintained in the House of Commons. . . . If these views had been boldly and consistently maintained by the Government from the first, war might have been averted, and the oppressed Rayahs would have learnt ere this that they had as staunch and stout a friend in the Lion as in the Bear, not to say a safer and more mag-

nanimous defender. But the opportunity has been allowed to pass. Another influence (a veiled force that has been working from the first) has been allowed to prevail . . . an influence that seems to have for its object to set the Lion and Bear by the ears . . . which has been allowing the Ship of State to drift, if not piloting her, nearer and nearer the Maëlstrom of war. . . . Mr. Cross's distinct avowal of neutrality at this crisis, when the dogs of war are yelping their loudest, the country owes to Mr. Gladstone and his resolutions—and as things are, even this is a great gain. Through Monday and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday nights, the speaking went on, and with much vehement recrimination; and after the two great guns of the week were fired—Mr. Gladstone's in defence of what might have been, Mr. Cross's reassurance as to what is—with little increase either of sweetness or light in the House. . . . Thus all the week has been taken up in a sharper defining of parties and policies on this Eastern quarrel, and above all in making it clear that England stands pledged not to strike on behalf of the effete and unimprovable Turk—or if she strike in at all, to do so only on behalf of grave national interests, when those interests are visibly menaced. . . . Chaff at such a moment, and on such a subject, is impertinence. *Punch* has felt a call to be serious, and to speak as he feels, without even putting the thin mask of irony over his seriousness.—*Punch*, May 19th.

[The writer refers to Sir Stafford Northcote, and his "poor parody" of Wordsworth's "We are Seven."]—He may yet find that the third and fourth of Gladstone's resolutions, though dead in the House of a compact Tory majority, yet live in the heart of England to take shape in the policy of the nation. Mr. Gladstone's reply did justice to the only new point that has arisen since this debate began—Lord Derby's answer to Prince Gortschakoff. He showed how if the Neutral Head of the Government Janus had spoken from the Exchequer and the Home Office, the other, or Non-Neutral Head, had uttered itself through that impolitic and insulting paper[1]—which quite deserves what hitherto has been its sole reward—the thanks of the Turkish Parliament.—*Punch*, May 26th.

[Mr. Gladstone's resolutions expressed profound popular sentiments which have become fixed ideas.]—*Fort. Rev.* July 1877.[2]

Mr. Gladstone's resolutions belong now to the past. When their true history comes to be written, it will perhaps surprise those who have regarded their author in the light of an erring sheep graciously received back into the fold in consideration of his tardy repentance. . . . The reception of Mr. Gladstone's resolutions out of doors was a revelation, not to Mr. Gladstone, but to the front Opposition bench. . . . They had misread the silence and inaction of the constituencies during the earlier part of the Session,

[1] Lord Derby's despatch of May 1st, *ante*, p. 182.
[2] P. 128. "A New Political Organisation." J. Chamberlain.

and accepted as a sign of agreement with their leaders what was really only an evidence of disgust at the absence of leaders. For the first time since the autumn the Liberal party in the country saw a clear path before it. . . . The response to Mr. Gladstone's declaration. . . . was more prompt and more unanimous than could have been conceived possible.

The truth of the matter is that the agitation of the autumn was not the least that mere flash of momentary excitement which those who feel an intuitive dislike of spontaneous popular movements persuaded themselves that it was. It expressed a determined if sudden resolution on the part of the Liberal electors that this country should never again be involved with their good-will in any co-operation, present or remote, direct or indirect, nominal or real, with the Ottoman Porte. . . . The agitation which was the first expression of this change of purpose ran its natural course. It was begun without any leader: it took definite shape when Mr. Gladstone became its leader; it languished and seemed ready to die, when, after the Session had begun, it found itself deserted by those to whom its authors had looked to give expression in Parliament to the feeling of the Liberal party in the country. For a time it appeared that Mr. Gladstone himself had become as lukewarm as his former colleagues, and if the feeling in the country had had no deeper root than its enemies imagined, the announcement of the resolutions would have fallen unnoticed upon the constituencies. That it did not do so is the best imaginable proof that there has been no change of sentiment or purpose in the Liberal party since the autumn. Until a fortnight ago they had no leader, and, like every army, they reflected in apparent lifelessness and disorganisation the want of a capable general. . . . But from the moment that the general came forward lifelessness and disorganisation disappeared. There would not have been time, in the short interval between the notice of the resolutions and the debate, to call a new feeling into existence; the fact that the flame leapt up so promptly showed that the fire had never been extinct. Liberal opinion had not mistaken itself; it was the Liberal leaders who had mistaken Liberal opinion.—*D. N.* May 15th.

There was of course a danger that as the war went on neutrality, subject to the specified interests, might slide into support of Turkey across the debateable ground of some of these interests. For this ground was still by common consent left vague.

Whether it would be necessary to fight for each and every one of the specified points, and the exact sense in which the specification was to be understood;—these were two points which the opponents of the "red" policy meant to reserve.

But meanwhile the assumption appears among the advocates of the "red" policy, that a consensus had been arrived at that it

would be imperative for any English Government to make war upon Russia should either of the four contingencies contemplated in the ministerial specification of "British Interests" occur. Not only so, it was confidently assumed that the conditions of English neutrality would be infringed, should the exigencies of the war bring the Russian army to Constantinople, as, for instance, the German armies were brought, in the war of 1870–71, to Paris.

> [The direct result of the long discussion has been that the most important of the representatives of the people have declared that the Government] must think henceforward of Great Britain as well as Bulgaria, and not wait until the march of events has rendered all measures of precaution late and ineffective. . . . No voice in the debate dared to raise itself against the declaration that Russia must cross swords with England before she steals a march on Constantinople or attempts any *coup de main* in the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, or pretends to interfere with the free passage of the Suez Canal. This agreement with what may be called the rudimentary conditions of British neutrality in the war is the first and solitary adhesion which the faction of St. James's Hall has given to the interests of the realm, and it was no doubt the reluctant price paid for an ostensible reunion of the party; but it is a considerable adhesion notwithstanding, and we are heartily glad that it has been extracted. . . . It will be impossible for those who have acceded to the statements of Mr. Cross—even were it only to keep the wreck of their resolutions afloat until the division—to object hereafter to vigorous action if any of those geographical points should be involved.
>
> [The journal proceeds to instruct "these evidently teachable pupils,"—"the hottest Coercionists, henceforth at one with us all about Egypt, Constantinople, and the defences near and far of the Turkish capital," in "what they have yet to learn in order to speak the language of an honest love of country."]
>
> The point to which, in the interests of England, we have gone beyond the unanimity of Parliament—and even beyond the public utterances of the Government—is in admonishing the nation that to complete the now universally accepted policy it is necessary not only to proclaim it, but to be prepared for it.—*D. T.* May 12th.

> The *Daily Telegraph* further said the debate brought out two points: 1st, that there was no support to coercion among the vast preponderance of members: 2nd, that the representatives of the nation are as resolutely bent as the nation itself upon defending the vital interests of the Empire; and it goes on to speak of Mr. Cross's definition of those interests as *not exhaustive*.—(May 15th.)

Such was the position in which the anti-"red" party had been placed by the course which the debate had taken, a course

for which the professed Peace party were in great measure responsible.

There remained the second question reserved, namely, the exact reading of Mr. Cross's specification. Practically this referred to two of the "interests" only—Constantinople and the Straits. Did the Cabinet mean to fight, as the "red" party confidently assumed, to prevent a mere military occupation of Constantinople, or only in the event of a permanent conquest being intended? Again, did the Cabinet mean to fight to prevent *any* alteration of the rule of the Straits whatever, or only in the event of Russia's demanding an alteration in a sense clearly inadmissible, *e.g.* that the Straits should be open to her war ships and to no others? It seemed as if the energies of the "violet" party had been exhausted in the struggle to prevent the English Government from treating the Russian declaration of war on Turkey as a *casus belli*, and as if, distrustful of their own power to contend with adverse influences in high places, and fearful lest these should prevail if the question were reopened, they were glad to put off the evil day when these further points might have to be considered.

§ 7. *The Supplement to the Charter of Neutrality.*

a. Russia will respect the English Interests.—The Russian reply to Lord Derby's despatch was, in effect, an acceptance of the conditions on which English neutrality was offered. On two points only did there seem to be room for controversy. The possibility of military operations leading to an occupation of Constantinople, as distinguished from its acquisition, was hinted at. Prince Gortschakoff repeated that the acquisition of that capital was excluded from the Emperor's views;—the Russian Government recognised that its future was a question of common interest, to be settled by a general understanding, and that as to its possession, it could not be allowed to belong to any of the European Powers. With regard to the Straits, it was hinted there might be a question which the Russian Government thought it important should be settled by a general agreement.

For the rest, the reply stated that the Russian Government would respect the interests mentioned by Lord Derby as long as England remained neutral. They expected England would in like manner take into fair consideration the peculiar interests which Russia had at stake, which consisted in the absolute neces-

sity of putting an end to the deplorable condition of the Christians under Turkish rule, and to the chronic state of disturbance provoked by it.[1]

b. Russia communicates her Terms.—Some further important communications, which however were not made public till long afterwards, took place between the two Governments about the months of June and July.[2] Confidential conversations took place between Lord Derby and Count Schouvaloff in June, and in July the Czar made certain observations to Colonel Wellesley, who was accredited to the Russian headquarters. The Russian ambassador intimated that their assurances with regard to Constantinople referred only to taking possession of it or occupying it permanently;—Russia, as a belligerent, could not undertake beforehand not to pursue her military operations up to the walls of the enemy's capital. But England and the other Powers, by inducing the Turks to make peace, might relieve Russia of the necessity of even approaching the town. In case Turkey sued for peace before her armies had crossed the Balkans, Russia would agree not to pass that line, and peace might be made on terms as to the various provinces which were sketched out, including the autonomy of Bulgaria up to the Balkans, and the assurance of a regular administration for the other Christian provinces. Europe would be invited to a Conference for the final settlement of the conditions of peace. Russia, however, would stipulate for certain special advantages for herself as compensation for the cost of the war—the annexation, perhaps, of the portion of Bessarabia lost in 1856, and of Batoum with adjacent territory in Asia Minor.

As to the Straits, it was again hinted that at the close of a successful war they might press the necessity of a reconsideration of an arrangement which, said Prince Gortschakoff, was conceived in a spirit of distrust and enmity to Russia. If, however, Russia had to pursue the war beyond the Balkans and until the Porte should be obliged to agree to peace, the terms of the Imperial Cabinet might be altered. Within the limits indicated could Russia count on the neutrality of England, a neutrality excluding

[1] *Russia*, ii. 1877. Lord Derby's despatch of May 6th, together with Prince Gortschakoff's reply, dated May $\frac{18}{30}$th, which was formally communicated to Lord Derby on June 8th, was published in the London morning newspapers of June 25th. The substance of the Russian reply had been announced in the London newspapers of June 8th. The text of both despatches is given in full by the Duke of Argyll (vol. ii. pp. 10-14).

[2] See *Turkey*, ix. and xv. 1878, and the account given by Argyll, vol. ii. chap. x.

even a temporary occupation of Constantinople and the Straits by her?

The Czar repeated to Colonel Wellesley that he had no idea of annexation beyond, perhaps, that of the territory Russia lost in 1856, and possibly that of a certain portion of Asia Minor. He would not occupy Constantinople for the sake of military honour, but only if such a step should be rendered necessary by the march of events. A temporary occupation of Bulgaria would be necessary. He had never entertained hostile feelings towards England, or desired to give her offence; "but if one is determined to 'chercher midi à quatorze heures' it is easy to take offence at anything."

The English Government did not, so far as appears, at that time intimate that they would regard the strategic occupation of Constantinople,[1] or proposals for any modification of the rule of the Straits, or the annexation hinted at, as incompatible with the continuance of English neutrality. The last is the only point of the three they seem to have touched on, and they did so only to express their satisfaction at the Russian disclaimer of any "extensive ideas of annexation." They appear indeed to have carefully avoided adding anything to their former expressions with regard to the Straits and Constantinople, except, indeed, that on July 28th the Russian ambassador was informed of the anxiety with which the English Government contemplated the prospect of disorder and bloodshed which they thought might occur at Constantinople as the Russian forces drew near the capital, and that they would not consider they were departing from their neutrality if they should be compelled to send the fleet to Constantinople, and thus afford protection to the European population against internal disturbances. These further negotiations were kept, so to speak, as a sort of secret codicil to the "charter of our neutrality" until some time after the commencement of the next Session of Parliament, when the papers were published.[2] Meanwhile the English public were left in ignorance that the Russian Government, in view of the actual outbreak of war, had seen fit to modify the Czar's declaration of the previous November to Lord Loftus at Livadia,[3] and the impression remained, that Russia was still pledged against demanding any increase of territory whatever. This impression

[1] Silence on this point seems to have been kept till December. See *post*, chap. xvii. § 8.

[2] The correspondence comprised in No. ix. appeared in the London newspapers on Feb. 8th, 1878, and that in No. xv., on Feb. 19th.

[3] *Ante*, p. 87.

the Premier appeared to endorse by his speech on Lord Mayor's day—a circumstance which did not escape comment when the Blue Books came to light.

> There is one more point on which the public has been kept in an ignorance which might usefully have been enlightened had Ministers seen fit. At the Guildhall on the 9th of last November Lord Beaconsfield told the Lord Mayor and his guests that the Emperor of Russia had on one occasion pledged his Imperial word of honour that he sought no increase of territory, and intimated that that word would be violated if Russia annexed any territory at the end of the war. . . . When the Prime Minister evoked the laughter and cheers of the citizens by his reference to a supposed promise of the Emperor not to annex territory, two several documents were in the Foreign Office, each of which showed that months before the Russian Government had specified certain territory which it meant to claim as a compensation for the losses of the war. Lord Beaconsfield's historic consciousness is not always a clear mirror of the past, and this makes it all the more important that the public should have the means of forming an independent judgment concerning matters which to them are of the utmost consequence.—*D. N.* Feb. 19th, 1878.[1]

[1] Compare letter from Rev. M. MacColl in *D. N.* Feb. 12th, 1878.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONDITIONAL NEUTRALITY.

§ 1. *Remainder of the Parliamentary Session.*

AFTER the division on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions we enter on a long period during which Public Opinion was, upon the whole, contented with maintaining an observant attitude, although the public interest was sustained at its high pitch.

The question, as one of practical politics, had narrowed itself to this: Should England make war upon Russia to resist either the progress of her arms, or the treaty which she would seek to impose upon Turkey at the conclusion of the war?

As it happened, the course of the campaign allowed the decision of this question to be postponed for a long time, and meanwhile there was a kind of truce in the party strife at home. The neutrality of the English Government towards Russia, conditioned on the respecting of certain limits, was reflected in the neutrality of the Opposition leaders towards the Government, conditioned on their abstaining from entrance upon an active "red" policy.[1]

Meanwhile the policy "Egypt" showed signs of coming to the front as an alternative, something as it did at the purchase of the Canal Shares, but, after all, only in a tentative and suggestive form.

> On every side we see signs of a disposition to argue that if the nation is resolved not to wage war for Constantinople, its only course is to possess itself finally of the most used and best known route to India, the one through the Delta of the Nile.[2] . . . We have not the slightest objection to offer to the general view thus

[1] Compare Mr. Gladstone's speech at Hawarden, alluded to in *D. N.* Nov. 24th, *post*, § 7.

[2] The writer refers to the *P. M. G.* and to Mr. Edward Dicey's article in the *19th Cent.* of June, *ante*, vol. i. p. 183.

expressed, and are only too pleased to find that there is a great line of policy upon which, as we believe is the case, the whole nation can be agreed; but we must put in two provisoes. That the occupation of Egypt by Great Britain would be a grand and certain benefit to the world we have pleaded for fifteen years,[1] long before there was the slightest chance of the dream being realised, and for reasons wholly unconnected with Russian designs or the destiny of Constantinople. No other Power can govern the unfortunate people of the Delta, with their marvellous industry, their unhappy submissiveness and their capacity for training, as they deserve to be governed. . . . We protest, in the name of common honesty, against the assumption that the occupation of Egypt is an act of anything but hostility to Turkey, and, in the name of humanity, against such an occupation unaccompanied by the burden and responsibility of government. . . . It will deprive the Sultans of a province which they own though they do not govern, from which they obtain a tribute which Great Britain can pay to no State on earth. . . . [To occupy Egypt is not to assist Turkey] but to announce that we have abandoned for ever the idea of protecting her, that we acquiesce in her erasure from the list of endurable Powers, Powers to be treated with and not coerced, and that we rank her with those States whose existence the world only endures while it considers the most expedient methods of superseding them. . . . With equal strength do we protest against the policy of establishing an Egyptian Protectorate, —of occupying a country, yet suffering a Turk to govern it. . . . Our moral right to Egypt is our capacity to make Egypt a reservoir of civilisation for East Africa, and our readiness to do it; and to occupy it, yet leave it the cesspool of iniquity it is now, would be to perform an act of selfish criminality.—*Spec.* June 9th.

After the Five Nights' debate but little was heard of the Eastern Question in Parliament during the remainder of the Session.

Sir William Harcourt wrote to the *Times*[2] to express his satisfaction with the ministerial definitions of "British Interests" which alone were to justify war, and Sir Henry James at Hereford[3] spoke of the debate as having had the good result that we now had this clear definition.

From time to time there was a rumour of some warlike proceeding on the part of the Government, and a corresponding flash of elation in the "red" newspapers; but in the result, either nothing came of it, or the matter was explained away by some Minister who was regarded as belonging to the section in the

[1] Compare Mr. Herbert Spencer's description of the *Spectator* as "The weekly organ of filibustering Christianity," *Sociology*, i. p. 603.

[2] May 19th.

[3] May 22nd.

Cabinet which was opposed to war with Russia. This section was regarded as keeping the upper hand, though indications were not wanting which kept alive the belief in an influence working in the other direction.

In the House of Lords, Lord de Mauley expressed alarm at the prospect of the progress of the Russian arms in Asia Minor. His fears were ridiculed by Lord Salisbury:—

> An impression seemed to pervade the speech of the noble lord that the frontiers of Russia and India were close together; and this leads me to say that in discussions on this subject a great deal of misunderstanding is caused by speakers having made use of maps drawn up on a small scale. (A laugh.) Looking at these small maps, and putting a finger on India and the thumb on Russia, they think the territory dividing them insignificant; but I assure noble lords that if they would use large maps—maps, say, on the same scale as the Ordnance maps of England—(laughter)—they would see that the distance is not to be gauged by any rule of thumb, but that, on the contrary, India is separated from Russian territory by mountain chains involving thousands of miles of travel, and offering, as regards invasion, rather serious obstacles to the most powerful army and the best-laid plans.—*Lord Salisbury, H. of L.* June 11th.

On the same evening Lord Derby and Lord Salisbury attended a dinner at the Merchant Taylors' School; and their speeches on that occasion were couched in the same reassuring vein.

> It has generally been acknowledged to be madness to go to war for an idea, but, if anything, it is yet more unsatisfactory to go to war against a nightmare.[1]—*Lord Salisbury*, June 11th.

> I agree in everything that has been said by my noble friend, that we must be ready to defend our interests when those interests are attacked; [but on the other hand we must not imagine British interests are attacked whenever anything is done in any part of the world without our concurrence.] After all we must remember this, that the greatest of all British interests is the interest of peace. . . . For my own part, having attended to foreign politics for a great many years, not many convictions have been so permanently impressed on my mind, as that of the utter incapacity, I do not say of the average man, but of the wise man, to foresee coming events. Therefore, I am very much of the mind of Mr. Canning. Some one once stated to Mr. Canning that war must come sooner or later. Mr. Canning's answer was, "Well, I had rather have the war later than sooner." Well, I am of the opinion of Mr. Canning.—*Lord Derby*, June 11th.

[1] See *Punch*, June 23rd. The cartoon depicts "three croakers" (the *Morning Post*, *P. M. G.* and *D. T.*) in a bed bestridden by the Russian bogey. *Lord Salisbury* (*loq.*): "Wake up, wake up, my little men! Don't make such a horrible noise! It's only the nightmare!"

A few days later, a conversation took place in the House of Lords which did not attract much attention at the time; but the significance of it afterwards became apparent.

> The *Duke of Argyll* alluded to certain rumours which had reached him to the effect that the British Government were about to change the policy they had of late years adopted in India with respect to independent nations, and that they were about to force a resident on the Ameer of Afghanistan. . . . He was convinced that any attempt to force a resident upon so jealous and suspicious a native prince as the Ameer of Afghanistan would result in a disastrous war which, although undoubtedly we should be successful, would cause an expense of millions to the Government of India, which in the present exhausted condition of their treasury it could ill bear.
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> The *Marquis of Salisbury* assured their lordships that there had never been the slightest intention on the part of the Government to inaugurate any change of policy with regard to Afghanistan. There was not the slightest intention to force a resident upon the Ameer of Afghanistan, or to make any hostile demonstration against him in the north-west provinces. No doubt the war between Turkey and Russia created a good deal of disquiet and agitation among the Eastern nations generally, but so far as the relations of the Indian Government with the Ameer of Afghanistan were concerned, it was their desire to deal with him in the future as in the past, to respect the rights of the Ameer, and do everything to maintain the integrity of his dominions.
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> The *Earl of Northbrook* expressed his gratification at the assurance which the noble marquis had given them that there was no intention to revert to the old policy of aggression in India. —*H. of L.* June 15th.

The *Daily News* alludes to a rumour that Ministers intend to ask for an extraordinary credit of five millions, which made its first appearance in a French newspaper on the 20th, and which depressed the funds. Any real confirmation of such a report would prove a most unpleasant surprise, because the alleged project is so out of harmony with recent declarations made by some of the most responsible Ministers of the Crown.—(June 22nd.)

> [The precise statements are premature;] the lapse of a very brief interval must, however, throw better light upon the intentions of the Government, and exhibit at once the extent and the significance of the credits which may be asked for. . . Whatever narrow or nervous views may be entertained by a section of the House of Commons—which not only fails to have "British interests" at heart, but almost scouts them—whatever obstacles may be cast in the way of national unity, the result will prove, we venture to predict, that those in Parliament, as in the country, who really understand and becomingly sustain the dignities and

rights of the Empire, are sufficiently strong to render the Administration perfectly secure of such sanction and assistance as they may consider themselves obliged to demand.—*D. T.* June 22nd.

The *Daily News* thinks if the Government persist in this determination, Lord Salisbury will resign, and speaks of the language used by that portion of the Press which habitually associates Hatfield and Hawarden in its vituperation, and which apparently derives its own inspiration from Hughenden. The notice of the vote of credit cannot be given before Monday, and there is time for wiser counsels to prevail. But there is reason for putting the country on its guard. It seems only too well in keeping with the principles and the utterances of at least some members of the Cabinet, that an attempt should be made to put the Government in possession of the means to intervene at any moment, and without consulting the country, in the war that is now going on. . . . . We trust that the House of Commons will never listen to any proposal for voting an extraordinary credit to the Government, on the mere faith of a Ministerial assurance that the Government will know how to apply it to the best advantage. . . . The Opposition, weak in the House, are powerful out of doors; and it will be their duty, by the use of every opportunity of Parliamentary discussion, to give the country the means of enlightenment and time to make its will known. One thing is certain—that any steps which might threaten to bring England into a war which should have for its result, if not for its avowed aim, the maintenance of Turkish misrule over its non-Mohammedan subjects, will lead to a very grave political conflict within and without the walls of Parliament.—(June 23rd.)

It is clear that if any such grant is asked, the Liberals must insist that its objects should be made thoroughly clear, and that Government should not be provided with an unfilled cheque. Some Liberals, Mr. Anderson in particular, have threatened if any such proposal is made to stop it by using the forms of the House, but that extreme course will hardly be required.—*Spec.* June 23rd.

The fact that the extraordinary credit of which we have lately heard so much has not yet been asked for ought not to induce the public to believe that the project has been abandoned. It will be brought forward, people say who profess to know, later on, and perhaps in some modified form. It is even asserted that, if by any process the Ministry could get over some internal obstacles to perfect unanimity, the proposal would be made at once. If, for example, the enterprising spirits whom the Prime Minister represents and guides were satisfied that they were strong enough to clear the decks of refractory colleagues, and to man the vessel without them, then the credit would be asked for immediately. . . It is confidently believed that the Cabinet contains men who, so far as this present controversey is concerned, sympathise rather with the Opposition than with Lord Beaconsfield. . . . If the

sitting of Parliament could somehow be got through without any exposure of the kind taking place, then in the quiet recess. . . . the whole power of the Government naturally falls into the hands of one or two leading men who understand each other. That is the dangerous time when, as Mr. Disraeli said in 1870, the public and some of the Ministers are, without their knowledge or co-operation, suddenly committed to a policy which never would have been accepted if there had been free and timely communication between the Government and the House of Commons. . . . The necessity for watchfulness on the part of the Opposition and the public only grows more clear and urgent as each day of the Session passes away.—*D. N.* June 30th.

In a telegram which we published on Monday, our correspondent at Athens announced the departure of the British Fleet from Phalerum for Turkish waters. Yesterday, in reply to questions from Lord Granville and Mr. Forster, Lord Derby and the Chancellor of the Exchequer informed the two Houses of Parliament that, in conformity with orders given, the Fleet was about to proceed to the station which it had occupied last year in Besika Bay. . . . The question will be asked, what is the meaning of this step? Does it mean that a race has begun between England and Russia, which shall get first to Constantinople? . . In Russia Lord Beaconsfield's action will doubtless be regarded as an unfriendly demonstration, coming perilously near to a threat of hostility. We speak of it as Lord Beaconsfield's action, for there is every reason to believe that it has been accepted by some of the most important members of the Cabinet as a compromise for the avoidance of more decisive measures. [Such a step] unsettles men's minds at a time when calmness is the only safety; it excites hopes in the Turks that are too easily encouraged; and it spreads everywhere an atmosphere of suspicion and alarm. Unless the Government can produce better reasons than are at present known to exist the last step they have taken may prove far more disastrous than the sum of previous blunders. Last year Lord Derby declared that the fleet had gone to Besika Bay for the protection of the Christians of Turkey from threatened massacre. Perhaps we shall hear the same explanation of its presence there this year. But Lord Beaconsfield gave other reasons, and other motives have probably impelled him now. If this be so, a principle has been accepted which, however harmless in its first application, is fraught with dangerous consequences. Fortunately the recess has not begun, and the House of Commons will fail in its duty if it does not draw from Ministers a clear statement of their purposes. —*D. N.* July 4th.

The inner desire of the Premier is so clearly revealed in this action, that it may be doubted whether any Liberal with a conscience can agree to trust the Government, during the recess, with any sum of money whatever. . . . It is quite vain to say that Parliament must be asked for more money before a war can be

commenced. That is true beyond argument, but it has nothing to do with the question, which is, whether Lord Beaconsfield, possessed of a credit for two millions, will not be able to take the steps which will in a few weeks render war absolutely inevitable. We believe he will; and believing that he intends war, and a war for Turkey, we hold that the money should be refused. [The precedent of 1870 is not to the point. In 1870 the country had confidence in Mr. Gladstone—now it has no proof Lord Beaconsfield would not spend the money in direct opposition to its will. If Lord Beaconsfield says the country is with him] let him take the manly course,—appeal to the country on the direct issue, and dissolve. If he wins, he will be master of the situation, able to assist the Pashas to his heart's content and without the necessity for subterfuge, and at liberty to reconstruct his Cabinet at his own discretion. Why does he not do it? Just because he knows he would be defeated, that his only chance of carrying out his cherished design is to beguile the country into some position from which it could not retreat without a sense of humiliating annoyance. [The money ought to be refused] on the distinct ground that this Parliament was not elected when this question was in front, and that before any grave resolution can be adopted the country should be directly taken into counsel—*Spec.* July 7th.

Sir Stafford Northcote, in reply to questions in the House of Commons, explained the object with which the fleet had been sent to Besika Bay.

> [It was] that it should be at a convenient station. The position of Besika Bay is a central one, which enables the Admiral to communicate, if necessary, with rapidity with Her Majesty's ambassador at Constantinople, or with the British Government, and it is thought to be a most convenient position for the fleet.—*Sir Stafford Northcote, H. of C.* July 6th.

There were those, however, who were not disposed to let such minimising explanations pass unchallenged.

> We find with pleased surprise that the very obvious reasons which the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave on Friday night for the new order have been heard with something like general accord and we had almost said patriotism . . . A Minister must necessarily speak as did the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Friday, when he is questioned with more curiosity than judgment. . . . It would be, perhaps, a self-deception much to be regretted, if our contemporaries really thought that seven ironclads and a frigate repair to Besika Bay simply to act as a telegraphic repeating station. They go to Besika Bay because the Russian army has crossed the Danube, without any clear pledge being simultaneously obtained from its master that he does not mean to go on to Constantinople. If this be accurately comprehended by our

newly-converted patriots, then indeed we are anxious not to mar the excellent effect of their present welcome agreement with the national policy.—*D. T.* July 9th.

A few days later again, the *Daily Telegraph* published a Paris telegram giving a report that the English Government had determined to despatch troops to occupy Gallipoli at once. This happened on a Saturday.[1] On the Monday it was known that troops were to be despatched to Malta. Replying to questions in Parliament Ministers explained that the step was taken to "strengthen the Mediterranean garrison," according to Lord Derby, by 3,000 men, or as Sir Stafford Northcote put it, "up to its proper complement."

Since the beginning of the war the nation has on the whole been tranquil amidst much that was calculated to disturb it, because as often as doubts or difficulties arose an appeal to Ministers has afforded the ready means of clearing up misunderstandings. Parliament, however, is rising at a critical period. Of late surprises have been frequent, and it will be strange if more are not in store. . . . Since the outbreak of the war Ministers have more than once made statements of policy which were immediately responded to by the country. We have had promises of the observance of a strict neutrality, coupled with a vigilant regard for British interests, and these gave universal satisfaction. Since then, however, the public mind has received some rude shocks. It was only the other Monday morning that the English people awoke to find themselves in the midst of startling preparations for a "British expedition to the East." Famous regiments were embarking in magnificent troop-ships, and nobody felt sure that we were not committed to a great war. The embarkations were explained: the troops were only going to Malta to fill up vacancies; but the surprise will not soon be forgotten.—*D. N.* Aug. 10th.

On August 9th in both Houses Ministers made successful appeals for the withdrawal of motions on the ground that a discussion of foreign affairs would be disadvantageous to the public interest. The Premier went on to state that the Government policy was one of strict but conditional neutrality. On August 10th Mr. Monk tried to get an answer to the question, whether the Government would resist a temporary occupation of Constantinople. This answer Sir Stafford Northcote refused to give. Being unsupported by the front Opposition Bench, Mr. Monk hinted that the leaders on both sides had come to an understanding.

[1] July 21st. See *post*, § 5, for the comments of the *Daily Telegragh* on the Ministerial explanations.

Mr. Forster intimated that the course of the Opposition leaders would have been different

> had we any reason to fear that the Government were likely between now and the opening of Parliament to drag the country into war, or involve it in any breach of neutrality.—*H. of C.* Aug. 10th.

There seems in fact to have been an understanding that nothing should be done to commit the country to a war, without due warning and opportunity of Parliamentary discussion, and that meanwhile the Opposition should hold their peace.

Shortly after the close of the session, Sir Stafford Northcote[1] spoke of the leaders of the Opposition as having assisted the Government on Imperial questions during the last two or three weeks of the session.

Mr. Forster[2] rejoined that he was glad to read that, because Sir Stafford knew very well that what they wanted was security that England should not be dragged into the war.

> [Mr. Forster's speech explains why stronger pressure was not exerted to bring on a discussion. The Opposition leaders were satisfied that enough had been done to keep the Government from yielding to the warlike designs of certain Ministers.]—*D. N.* Aug. 29th.

The session closed on August 11th.

§ 2. *Mr. Gladstone as the Exponent of Out-of-Door Public Opinion.*

a. Mr. Gladstone's position.—Comparing the summer of 1877 with the state of things a year before, Public Opinion had suffered a disappointment in its reliance on Parliament—at all events on the sitting Parliament—and had lost much of its self-confidence in its own power to control the Executive. It no longer believed that it had but to blow the trumpet loudly enough and that all resistance to its will would go down like the walls of Jericho before the blast.

It was rather Mr. Gladstone's fine image of Sisyphus[3] which now reflected its inner thought. The danger had been averted with toil and pain, but it was still impending, and if the effort were relaxed it would come crashing down. Those who held

[1] Plymouth, Aug. 27th.

[2] Bradford, Aug. 28th.

[3] See *post*, p. 226.

the anti-Turkish views genuinely believed that those views constituted the preponderating national feeling. This great body of opinion had, after a hard struggle, succeeded at best in drawing the battle. It had, to be sure, averted the actual adoption of the opposite policy for the time being, but it had not succeeded in directing the diplomacy of the country into a really safe, much less into a beneficent, channel.

Thus an important body of opinion had become impressed with the conviction that there existed an influence making for the pro-Turkish policy, whose force could not exactly be measured, but which could plainly contend with Public Opinion for sovereignty on something like equal terms, even if in the end it did not turn out to be completely victorious. Against this usurpation, as it deemed it, whether the usurpation arose from the accidental circumstances of the Liberal party and the course adopted by its official leaders in the present Parliament, or whether it sprang from more deeply-seated causes, anti-Turkish Public Opinion desired to protest. There was thus engendered an uneasiness, a sense of something out of joint, and a seeking for some leader who could put it right, which found vent in an extraordinary enthusiasm which was shown at this time for Mr. Gladstone, and which made even his holiday tours resemble nothing so much as a royal progress. It would be difficult to explain this extraordinary enthusiasm, except on the supposition that Mr. Gladstone discharged a function the need of which was keenly felt.

He stands forth as the representative of the great mass of Public Opinion which had failed to find adequate expression in Parliament; and recognising how completely he gave expression to its thought Public Opinion instinctively turned to him, eager to hear its own convictions expressed in his glowing words, to endorse them as they fell from his lips, and thus to bear witness to the strength and vitality of an opinion which had somehow missed obtaining the recognition which was due to it. People turned to Mr. Gladstone as more truly representative of Public Opinion than the representative House, and he seemed to wield far greater force upon the platform than in Parliament.

b. The Bingley Hall Meeting.—The most striking exemplification of this mood occurred perhaps on May 31st, when a great meeting was held at the Bingley Hall, Birmingham, where Mr. Gladstone was the chief speaker. This Bingley Hall gathering has a twofold aspect. In one it is connected with a new development

of party organisation;[1] in the other it marks the protest of out-of-door Public Opinion that the policy which had emerged in the Five Nights' debate (and which it was now too late to alter for the better, though it might be altered for the worse) did not represent the policy which would have been adopted had this stream of Public Opinion had what it deemed to be its proper constitutional weight.

> There was another feature of the autumn agitation which was greatly blamed at the time, and which it may be necessary nevertheless to reproduce on a yet larger scale. When the Turkish alliance was first denounced at public meetings, those who took part in them were told that they were usurping the functions of Parliament. . . . The schism between Mr. Gladstone and his former colleagues, though it was healed or averted for the occasion of the late debate, represents a real difference of opinion in the Liberal party as to the policy of England in the East. In Parliament, perhaps, the front Opposition bench commands the larger share of Liberal support. . . . There are many who think that this is a wrong estimate of Liberal feeling out of doors, and that if the Liberal electors had now to pronounce between Mr. Gladstone and his late colleagues they would give an unmistakable verdict in favour of Mr. Gladstone. Those who hold this opinion are perfectly justified in taking such extra-Parliamentary means as present themselves to make this inconsistency between Liberal feeling in Parliament and Liberal feeling out of Parliament more evident to those whom it most concerns to know it. This is the justification of such meetings as those which it is intended to hold at Birmingham next week.—*D. N.* May 22nd.

> Mr. Gladstone's visit to Birmingham to-day coincides significantly enough with the re-assembling of the House of Commons. . . . Nothing can testify more clearly to the redistribution of political influence, the gradual enlarging of the basis of political power, which is going on in our days, than the fact that of late years our leading statesmen have found it necessary to address the public directly from the platform as well as indirectly from the benches of Lords or Commons. The change may seem auspicious to some, and full of evil omen to others, but that it is taking place must be evident to all. . . . Parliamentary government, according to Macaulay, is government by speaking. In our days, Macaulay would have had to enlarge the scope of his definition of speaking, and take in speaking from the platform as well as from the floor of Parliament. In the early part of the century platform speaking was the business of the mob orator; later still it belonged only to the agitator or the irresponsible partisan; in our days it is distinctly becoming part of the business of every statesman who aspires to great influence over his countrymen. . . . It is of especial advantage to the interest of this country at the present moment that

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 22.

responsible Parliamentary orators are all alike free to address the public directly, and to offer counsel on questions that in other times would have seemed to belong to the business of Parliament alone. Just now one great subject of discussion engages the attention of the country. On that subject it is not at all certain that the country and the majority in the House of Commons are altogether of one mind. . . . At such a time it is of inestimable importance that there should be some means of establishing a criticism and control outside the walls of Parliament. . . . The danger in the present case is that the country might be committed to a policy which is absolutely opposed to the distinct and rational convictions of the vast majority of the English people. . . . The Opposition in the House of Commons may do their very best to prevent anything of the kind, but it is needless to say that their strength must come from outside the walls of Parliament. . . . The farther the Session has advanced the clearer is the necessity of stamping on the mind of the Ministry the conviction of the majority, not in the House of Commons, but in the country. The public out of doors will have to watch with unceasing and unwearying care every symptom of a policy on the part of the Ministers that might threaten England with the responsibility of a cause it thoroughly detests. Mr. Gladstone's visit to Birmingham will, we trust, do much to keep alive in the country the vigilance that in Parliament seemed for a moment to slumber. The declarations of the autumn were no momentary outbursts of mere humane feeling shocked at the tidings of hideous crimes, but a deliberate expression of a national conviction.—*D. N.* May 31st.

This was the aspect which drew together the enthusiastic crowds who thronged the streets of Birmingham and filled the meeting hall. They did not come together to testify their approval of Mr. Chamberlain's organisation, but to cheer Mr. Gladstone as the exponent of their policy on the Eastern Question. Mr. Gladstone touched lightly on the question of organisation, and then turned to what he said was the main question on which he had to address his auditors, the question of the East. Was there still reason, he asked, to be on the alert?

I wish I could answer that such anxiety was not necessary. On the contrary, the proofs are so clear, so overwhelming, that it is impossible to place reliance upon the policy of the Government. What is the policy of the Government to-day? What will be the policy of the Government to-morrow? What was it when Lord Beaconsfield made his Guildhall speech, and what was it when Lord Salisbury spoke in manly terms at Constantinople the sentiments of the British nation? The policy of the Government! What is it? Is it not a policy of zigzag and see-saw? Unfortunately I am driven to the conclusion that when it moves in the right direction it moves under popular pressure, and that

when that popular pressure is withdrawn it is apt to move in the wrong one. . . . It would be hardly an exaggeration to say that we have not one Government, but two—one pulling in one direction conformably to the public sentiment; the other placed nearer the springs of action, steadily and constantly watching its opportunity for the slightest appearance of division or tacit remission in the manifestation of public feeling, turning its course directly to the old sense of virtual assistance to the Turk, like the dog returning to his vomit, or the sow to her wallowing in the mire. But there is another issue. Don't conceal it from yourselves that you have the House of Commons against you. I wish that many of you had been present during the late debate. I wish that you had heard, and had observed the reception which was given to the speeches of the Government. I take, for example, the speech of Mr. Cross. Whenever Mr. Cross expressed a sentiment that could be interpreted into support of the Turkish cause . . . he was greeted by tempests of cheering from behind. But when he proceeded in some valuable sentences to dispose of the absurd chimeras by which British interests have been conjured up upon every spot of the globe to terrify us from doing our duty, when in language plain and manly he said there was no British interest involved in the Russian operations now going on in Asia Minor or in the occupation by Russia of Bulgaria for the purposes of war —that is, for temporary purposes—his words fell flat and dead. . . . I fully admit that we have a great responsibility in working upon a matter of foreign policy—systematically working as we have done against the Executive Government, and against the sense of the House of Commons. It is a thing that is rarely done, and it is a thing which I hope will rarely have occasion to be done again. Why have we done so? Firstly, because of the deep nature and interest of the principles involved; and secondly, because we have a firm and unwavering conviction that the country is on our side. (Loud cheers.) I go further: it is remarkable that the country should be on our side, but more than that, the Empire is on our side. . . . In the newspapers of Australia you will find articles on the afflictions of the subject races in Turkey as animated as any of those that have been written in our own journals; and in one case, I remember particularly, at the very Antipodes underneath us, in the settlement of Otago in New Zealand, there was held a public meeting, distinguished by as much enthusiasm as a public meeting in Birmingham, to describe the sorrow and indignation with which they had heard of the existence of these horrors. This is an extraordinary state of things, and yet it is disputed whether the country is with us or not! Well, ladies and gentlemen, it is difficult to convince a man who can only be convinced against his will; but there would be one method of ascertaining it, the method of a dissolution of Parliament. . . . Now there are two objects which are distinct one from the other —the one is the maintenance of neutrality in the present question between Russia and Turkey; the other is the endeavour . . . to

organise a real and living concert of Europe for the purpose of requiring from Turkey the adoption of necessary changes. . . . We are told that we are the school of sentiment. I ask how it happens, if we are the school of sentiment, that every historian in the country is strongly on our side? I ask how it is that men so widely differing in all their incidents of character and opinion, as Mr. Freeman, Mr. Froude, Mr. Carlyle—I believe I might add to them Mr. Stubbs, Mr. Green, and many more—that these gentlemen, who represent the historical school of England, the first three in particular, how it is that all these men share to the very uttermost the opinions which have been expressed by us upon this platform to-night? . . . We are, as I ventured to say in the House of Commons, rolling the stone of Sisyphus up hill, and the moment we cease to push, the stone begins obstinately to roll down again. Such is our position. We have not gained all we wish, but we have gained something. By a popular action, irregular and unusual, but necessary, and in my opinion sanctified both by the purity and wisdom of its aims, we have checked the evil tendencies of the Government, and we have done something to enforce the good. We have made it doubtful, at all events, through the world, whether the England that was speaking to Europe twelve months ago was the real England of the English nation. And now it may perhaps still be true that the Government which speaks in our name is subtle, is half-hearted, is equivocal; gives promises where they are of little use, and at the vital moment refrains and draws back from what it has said. But still we can do something to show that the Government, if by the forms of the Constitution it is in the possession of power, is not the legitimate and authentic representative of our minds and convictions; that the great heart of England still beats as it has ever beaten before, and that every hope it can cherish, every aspiration it can breathe, are hopes and aspirations in regard to this great question of the East on the side of freedom, of justice, and of peace.—*Mr. Gladstone at Bingley Hall,* May 31st.

The great demonstration at Birmingham on Thursday seems to have been a most wonderful and unique affair. Fifty thousand people followed Mr. Gladstone through the streets, and half that number, at the very least, were crowded together to hear him in the great Bingley Hall, in which he spoke. The tall houses on both sides were alive with faces intent on seeing and cheering him, and even on the roofs were parties of spectators, as if the procession had been a royal one. The roaring cheers of the crowd, the wild waving of hats, and the tremendous clapping frightened the horses, which are said to have been continually rearing through a great part of the two miles' procession, and only in the last half-mile did the density of the crowd at all decrease. It is estimated that the number of the spectators on the route through which Mr. Gladstone passed must have been at least a quarter of a million, the artisans with paper caps on their heads, and their shirt-sleeves rolled up, constituting a very large proportion of the sight-seers,

Probably no mere statesman has ever before met such a reception. —*Spec.* June 2nd.

Nobody pretends that Mr. Bright could have gone to any town in England at [the time of the Crimean War] and got a vote like that passed unanimously in Bingley Hall last night. Mr. Gladstone has done so now simply because, in his views on the subject of the Christian population of the Turkish Empire, the majority of Englishmen are with him. Nor can it be said that their sympathy with his opinions is the result of Mr. Gladstone's persuasive advocacy. The nation may be said to have been before him in his opinion. It has welcomed his leadership, but it had already set its face resolutely in the direction of what is now called Mr. Gladstone's policy, before he had given the movement the sanction of his great authority or the benefit of his eloquence. The autumn agitation was a spontaneous outburst of national feeling. It was made in the absence of leaders, and showed that an intelligent people, accustomed to weigh evidence and compare statements, did not need to be told by any authority what to think or say even on a question of foreign policy. . . . . This is the real history of yesterday's meeting. It simply shows that the feeling of Englishmen now is what it was when it astonished politicians and confounded diplomatists last year. It is a proof that the discussions of ten months have served to confirm the most intelligent and active Liberals in the constituencies in the opinions at which they arrived when the controversy first began. . . . . Mr. Gladstone won a moral victory even in a House of Commons which, as he told his great audience last night, is against him on this subject, but he expressed the firm and unwavering conviction that the country is on his side, and not the country only but the Empire. It is, of course, useless to challenge those who claim that English feeling is for saving Turkey to appeal to the country. They will not venture on holding a single public meeting to express sympathy with Lord Beaconsfield, and confidence in the policy of zig-zag and see-saw. . . . . They will only reply to the challenge that they are content with the Parliamentary majority. The Government, however, will be wiser than its friends and advocates, and will move in the right direction under popular pressure, though it may take the wrong direction when that pressure is withdrawn.—*D. N.* June 1st.

The *Times* complains that Mr. Gladstone has nothing tangible to set forth.—(May 29th.)

It seems incredible, but there is nothing to show a recognition of the state of war which exists.—(June 2nd.)

c. Enthusiasm for Mr. Gladstone.—During the course of the summer Mr. Gladstone made many other public references to the Eastern Question, some of them of a holiday or improvised character. That such were demanded of him, and deemed appropriate, indicates how deep and widespread was the opinion he was

called upon to express.[1] There was no indication that the truce of the "Conditional Neutrality" had brought with it any return to the lassitude and indifference to political questions which had characterised Public Opinion during the first part of Mr. Disraeli's administration. On the contrary, the intensest interest still prevailed; and if the time was not one of active agitation, indications were not wanting that this was only because until some new departure should be taken, agitation had nothing definite to which to direct itself.

In reply to an address from some Baptist Churches deprecating the rumoured vote of credit, Mr. Gladstone wrote saying :—

> [it was not easy to see how such a vote could fail to revive in the Porte the expectation of English assistance. We have virtually repudiated a noble duty, but it is a long stride beyond this in the direction of mischief to countenance or support that great iniquity, the Turkish domination.] . . . . The majority, as I believe, of the nation, have warmly desired that we should ourselves have undertaken, and should have encouraged the other Powers to undertake, a great and safe collective work. . . . . Through influences which have too largely prevailed in deciding the action of the Government, this desire has been entirely baffled.—*Mr. Gladstone's letter, D. N.* July 3rd.

About the middle of July Mr. Gladstone took a holiday trip to the west, in the course of which he was constantly requested to give short informal addresses, for the most part in the open air, by crowds of people who assembled to hear him wherever they got the opportunity.

> When Mr. Gladstone landed[2] he was greeted with the acclamations of hundreds of Plymouthians, and in obedience to the wishes of the concourse, expressed through Mr. Hicks, chairman of the Liberal party, Mr. Gladstone mounted on the box of the carriage which was waiting to convey them to the hotel, and delivered a brief but spirited address, which was received with manifestations of great satisfaction and rounds of cheering.
>
> [*Mr. Gladstone* asked: What would you think] of a private individual who, when he heard of a conflagration raging in the town in which he lived, would say he was very sorry, but he was not called upon to interfere, as none of his property was jeopardised? . . . . . Gentlemen, this is not the proper standard of English statesmanship. (Great cheers.) . . . . . I believe that there are men in the Government who are well disposed upon

[1] Compare reception of Mr. Gladstone on his winter trip, *ante*, p. 146.

[2] At Plymouth, on the return of Mr. Gladstone's party from an afternoon trip up the Tamar. They had arrived at Plymouth by sea, the same morning.

this question, I believe that there are men who are not. Let us endeavour to strengthen the hands of those who think rightly and justly, and to weaken the hands of those who hold views we believe to be far from right and just. Considerations of party ought not to be thought of for a moment in so great a controversy.

[The same evening Mr. Gladstone's party went on to Exeter] staying there at the invitation of the Liberal Association of the town for the purpose of receiving an address. They were met at the railway station at half-past nine by a large gathering of members of the Association and citizens, and escorted thence to the principal hotel by bands of music and a torchlight procession. . . . . The square outside the hotel was densely packed with an enthusiastic crowd. After receiving the address, Mr. Gladstone intimated that he would reply to it from the balcony, although it was then past ten o'clock, and rain had commenced to fall. The square was illuminated by limelight.

[Mr. Gladstone (after touching on other matters) said] I cannot dismiss you without referring to the warm testimony given me in your address with respect to the great subject of the war that is now raging in Eastern Europe. There are two classes of persons who say that that war is an unnecessary war, but those classes, although they agree in words, entirely differ in sentiment and principle. I am one of those who say that the war is an unnecessary war, and ought to have been avoided. But on no account confound me with another set of gentlemen who say the very same thing, and why? Because what they mean is this, that nothing ought to have been done to relieve the Christian population of the East from grinding oppression. . . . . It is not in that sense that I think the war is unnecessary. I think the war has a noble purpose in view—("Hear," and "No")—and God grant that the Power who is waging it may not be seduced by ambition or selfishness to mar in any degree that noble purpose. (Cheers.) But what I lament is this, that now instead of watching a bloody conflict, instead of asking ourselves whether Russia can be trusted or cannot—a question not very easy to answer —instead of this we might, as I firmly believe, ourselves have been the means of avoiding this war altogether, if only we had promoted the concert of Europe instead of checking it, if only we had contemplated vigorous action instead of idle words. . . . . Be watchful against the slightest indication, and I am sorry to say in some quarters there are many indications, of a disposition to raise vain alarms about British interests, which interests are in no danger at all. (Applause.) Let us, on the other hand, endeavour a little to preach the doctrine of British duties.—*D. N.* July 14th.

On August 20th Mr. Gladstone addressed a large party of excursionists from the terrace at Hawarden. On this occasion he glanced at the Eastern Question, saying many words were not

necessary to a perfect understanding between himself and his auditors.[1]

d. Attacks on Mr. Gladstone.—On the other hand Mr. Gladstone became the object of some very hostile manifestations :—

> I have never known a question relating to a foreign country that has taken so strong a hold upon the legitimate interests of the people, and I certainly have never known a question that has excited more of passion in the country. I have received myself, from day to day, many letters commending me far beyond what I deserve, with reference to this question. I have received, also, some letters containing very fair and just expostulation from people who disapprove of what I have done and said, and who argue rationally, and in a manner of which there is nothing to be ashamed. I have received also a set of letters, the violence and fury, aye, even the grossness of which can hardly be conceived, and generally containing extracts from particular newspapers—(laughter, and a voice, "*The Telegraph*,") which they recommend me to read.—*Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden*, Sept. 1st.

> The official newspaper, the *Bassiret*,[2] and other Turkish papers are making attacks upon Mr. Gladstone of a singularly virulent character. . . . . Nobody who knows anything about Constantinople newspapers would believe that these attacks are spontaneous. . . . . The only reason for these attacks at the present moment which I can suggest is that the Turks have got the idea into their heads that this kind of thing will be agreeable to the pro-Turkish party in England.—*Constantinople Correspondent, D. N.* Nov. 10th.

§ 3. *Course of the Campaign.*

We must glance for a moment at the theatre of war to which the centre of interest was now in a great measure shifted.

The Russians crossed the Pruth without opposition from the Roumanians, and shortly afterwards the latter proclaimed their independence, and joined their forces with those of Russia in the attack upon Turkey.

Active operations commenced with a Russian invasion of Armenia, and with preparations for forcing the passage of the Danube. It soon appeared, however, that the Russians had received a severe check in Asia, and that they could make no

[1] It was on this occasion that the affectionate enthusiasm which Mr. Gladstone inspired found expression in the homely present of a walking-stick—one "which had all the qualities of a good stick," as Mr. Gladstone said in thanking the donors.

[2] The account of "The man Gladstone, protector of mischief," which the correspondent forwards from the *Bassiret*, is a curiosity. It explains his behaviour by the fanaticism of race, ascribing to him a Bulgarian origin, his father being one Demitri, who was servant to a pig-dealer.

progress in Armenia for the present. The crossing of the Danube, too, hung fire. It was at last effected on June 27th.

When over the river the Russians turned outward to right and left. A portion of their forces, under the command of the Czarewitch, was constituted into the "army of Rustchuk," and charged with the duty of confronting the Turkish army which rested on the fortresses of the Lower Danube. Another portion of the invading army turned their faces to the westward, while the main column, under the Grand Duke Nicholas, slowly moved southward. The Grand Duke entered Tirnova on July 12th, and a few days later General Gourko crossed the Balkans with a small force of Russians and Bulgarians. He was regarded as the precursor of the main column, but meanwhile this had received a check. On July 31st Gourko's Bulgarians were defeated at Eski-Zagra[1] by Sulieman, who had been hastily summoned from Montenegro for the defence of Adrianople. A day or two later the Russians retreated to the north of the Balkans.

It appears to have been anticipated that the Turkish efforts would be mainly directed against the army of Rustchuk, but meanwhile a Turkish column from Widdin had taken post at Plevna, a town lying to the west of the main line of the Russian advance from the Danube.

About the end of the third week in July a comparatively small Russian force sent against the place was repulsed. On the 31st another attack was made by a large force consisting of about 32,000 infantry besides cavalry and artillery. But meanwhile Osman Pasha, with the bulk of the Turkish forces from Widdin, had thrown himself into the place, which, moreover, had been immensely strengthened by a line of earthworks passing through a series of villages lying round Plevna. The Russians sustained a great defeat. It had become impossible for the Russians to continue their advance, even if their communications by the bridge over the Danube could be regarded as secure.

The position of the invading Russians now formed, roughly, three sides of a hollow square. To the east the army of Rustchuk confronted a Turkish force which for a time was under Mehemet Ali. On the west was the force operating against Plevna. General Gourko had retired again within the quadrangle, of which the wall of the Balkans formed the south side. Some comparatively small Russian detachments now stood blocking the opening of the

[1] *Post*, p. 245.

Shipka Pass against Suleiman Pasha. The remaining side of the square was formed by the Danube, and the Russian communications lay across one bridge at Simnitza.

Suleiman broke his army to pieces in the vain attempt to force the Shipka Pass. The attempt, which was foiled when on the point of success by the timely arrival of reinforcements to the aid of the hard-pressed Russians, was relinquished after a week of desperate fighting (August 21st to 27th).

Meanwhile from day to day the importance of Plevna became more and more manifest. The efforts of the Russians were concentrated on the attempt to dislodge Osman. The army operating against Plevna was strongly reinforced, and about the end of August Prince Charles of Roumania was appointed to the command of it. A sortie which Osman made on August 31st was repulsed, and the Russians prepared for a supreme effort.

On September 11th they were once more defeated in a great battle. After bombarding the position for four days they delivered a great infantry assault under the eyes of the Czar. The Russian columns were repulsed with enormous slaughter. But all that Osman had done was to foil his foes in their attack for the time being. He had not crushed them or driven them away. On the contrary, they gathered around him in ever increasing numbers. The gaps in the Russian ranks were filled, the guards were brought up, and the Russian entrenchments were continually extended from either flank, curving inwards till they well-nigh met. Plevna was hemmed in on every side.

Meanwhile the tide had turned in Asia. On October 15th the Russians defeated Mukhtar Pasha in a great battle at Aladja Dagh, and about a month later they captured Kars.

It was becoming more and more apparent that the capture of Plevna was only a question of time. An attempt to aid Osman Pasha from the Sophia side by a so-called "Army of Relief" came to nothing. Bread was growing short, and on December 10th Osman attempted to cut his way out through the Russian investing lines. He failed, and on the next day he surrendered with his entire army, and Plevna was occupied by the Russians.

After this the Russian advance was rapid. Servia took the opportunity to declare war again, but this had little or no influence on the campaign. The Russian soldiers had still to fight many hard actions in the Balkans, and they still had many difficulties to encounter from the weather and the country; but the fall of Plevna

had broken the backbone of the Turkish resistance. The remnant of Suleiman's army was driven into the Rhodope mountains. The Russians pushed on towards Constantinople. Philippopolis was occupied by the Russians on January 16th, 1878, and Adrianople on the 20th.

An armistice was concluded at the end of January; but in carrying the campaign so far we have got beyond the lull of the conditional neutrality in England, and entered upon a time when quite a different state of things prevailed.

§ 4. *The Competition of Atrocities.*

a. Recriminatory and fictitious charges.—While the course of the campaign was anxiously watched with respect to the varying fortunes of the Russian arms, there was another aspect of the war which was forced upon public attention. This was the subject of "Atrocities."

The subject had become one to which all purveyors of information from the seat of war devoted sedulous attention;[1] but the public interest in it, except in so far as a spirit of partisanship had been aroused, was by no means proportionately keen.

We have already seen that during the Servian campaign the barbarous methods of warfare resorted to by the Turks attracted

[1] See *The War Correspondence of the Daily News*, 1877 (published by Macmillan, 1878), and Mr. Forbes's article, "Russians, Turks, and Bulgarians," *19th Cent.* Nov. 1877.

The subject constantly appears in the Blue Books. Besides various references to Turkish barbarities in the course of the Servian campaign, occurring in i. and various consular reports relating to the state of affairs in Bosnia in the early part of the year (xi. xx.-xxii.), the Turkey Blue Books of 1877 contain the official Turkish complaints against the Russians, as well as many reports from English consuls, and from Colonel Wellesley, the English officer attached to the Russian head-quarters (xxiii. and xxiv.).

In the Blue Books of 1878, the bulky *Turkey* i. contains further reports on the same subject, and also correspondence relating to the German protest against the violation of the Geneva Convention by the Turks (Nos. 256, 259, and others).

xxi. relates to the harsh and rough treatment which certain English doctors, who were taken prisoners by the Russians, experienced at their hands.

xxxii. contains reports on atrocities committed in the Greek provinces of Turkey by irregular Turkish troops. (See No. 193.)

xxxiv. relates to the death of Mr. Ogle, a correspondent of the *Times*, who visited the scene of the insurrection in Thessaly, and was killed (March, 1878) under circumstances which raised a suspicion of his having been murdered by the Turks.

xxviii. and xxxv. contain references to Mussulman atrocities and Christian repirsals in Crete.

xlii. contains many references to the treatment of the districts occupied by the Russians on their advance, and subsequently to the Treaty of San Stefano.

xlv. relates to the complaints of the Mussulmans. See *post*, p. 240, as to the Rhodope commission.

Turkey, 1878, liii. and liv., which relate to the period subsequent to the Treaty of Berlin, also contain various reports of the outrages on one side or the other.

attention,[1] and we have noted too that there was a disposition displayed by some of the Turkish partisans, whenever the subject of "Atrocities" was in question, to resort to the *tu quoque* argument, and to insist that the Turks and their enemies were engaged in a "Competition of Barbarism."[2] Soon after the entrance of the Russian army into Bulgaria, charges of "atrocities" began to be brought against the Russians and the Bulgarians.[3] But from the partisan character with which the subject had become invested, and the unscrupulousness shown in promulgating stories to blacken an adversary, it became an exceedingly difficult matter to appreciate exactly how much foundation there was in fact for these accusations.

> The *Spectator* notes that the Turkish Government has discovered that Western Europe disapproves atrocities, and accordingly has begun to issue a series of despatches accusing the Russian troops of all possible cruelties. On the other hand, the Russian Government is exceedingly anxious that the atrocities committed by the Turks in Bulgaria should be made known. It is more than probable that both sides are using these stories as a kind of asphyxiating shells.—(July 14th.)
>
> The pro-Turkish Press still continues to circulate stories of Russian atrocities, some of which are palpably pure inventions.—(July 21st.)
>
> It is becoming apparent that all the charges of barbarity brought against the Cossacks and Bulgarians are not mere Turkish inventions. True, it is not even yet easy to estimate the precise amount of truth in the most specific charge yet brought,—that of the various newspaper correspondents who have put their signatures to the document published in all the daily papers of Monday.[4]

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 342, and vol. ii. p. 53. [2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 86.

[3] Subscription lists were opened for "The Turkish Compassionate Fund" and the like. At the same time, appeals continued to be made for the Christians of various localities. The gifts of the charitable, it may well be imagined, were not altogether free from partisan bias.

[4] The document referred to was a minute purporting to have been signed at Shumla by the representatives of various newspapers, sent to the Ottoman embassy at Paris by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs. The minute runs as follows:—

"The undersigned, representatives of the foreign press assembled at Shumla, deem it their duty to sum up and sign the narratives they have separately addressed to their newspapers on the acts of cruelty committed in Bulgaria against the inoffensive Mussulman population. They declare that they have seen with their own eyes, and have interrogated, both at Rasgrad and at Shumla, women, children, and old men wounded by lance and sword thrusts, not to speak of injuries from firearms, which might be attributed to the accidents of legitimate war. These victims gave horrible accounts of the treatment the Russian troops and Bulgarians inflict on the fugitive Mussulmans. According to their declarations, the entire Mussulman population of several villages has been massacred. Every day there are fresh arrivals of wounded. The undersigned declare that women and children are the most numerous among the victims, and that they bear lance wounds."—(See *Times*, July 23rd.)

The *Times* (Aug. 4th) publishes a letter from a correspondent with the Turkish

But the use made of these facts by the pro-Turkish Press is certainly very remarkable.—(July 28th.)

The manufacture of "atrocities" still continues brisk, each party hoping to out-exaggerate the other. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that many horrors are perpetrated on both sides by irregular troops and by the native populations, Mussulman and Bulgarian.—*Special Correspondent at Constantinople, T.* Aug. 4th.

The Correspondents most favourable to the Russian cause leave us in little doubt that wherever General Gourko went beyond the Balkans he ordered or suffered the Bulgarians in his wake to commit what ferocities they pleased upon the Muslim peasants. He marched through the mountains with a "brigade of vengeance," recruited for this savage work, and the evidence of the miserable women who escaped is unanimous that their husbands, brothers, and sons were either shot down by the Cossack, or butchered by Bulgarian Christians. The country thus devastated is one of the loveliest in the world—its fields are rose gardens, its common industry is to produce the most exquisite of perfumes—but now, thanks to "Christianity" after the fashion of General Gourko and St. James's Hall, those fair uplands are strewed with decaying corpses, while the ruins of smoking villages show in what manner "holy Russia" "ameliorates Bulgaria."—*D. T.* Aug. 16th.

The Turks have tried to blow hot and cold—to profit by their barbarism, and plough with the heifer of civilisation. While slaying and sparing not, they have addressed whining, and it may be added lying, appeals to Europe invoking the enactments of the Geneva Convention, which they themselves set at naught. Wielding the axe and chopper of ruthless savages, they have acted like a pack of querulous and mendacious old women in cackling to Europe their trumped-up allegations of violations of civilised warfare on the part of their enemies.—*A. Forbes, 19th Cent.* Nov. 1877.

b. The Residuum of Truth.—What seems clear is that when the Russian columns crossed the Danube and the Turkish troops fell back before the invaders, the Bulgarian inhabitants were at

army, entitled "A Conspiracy against Truth." He tells how the Turkish authorities attempted to get his name forged to a fictitious telegram, announcing massacres and outrages by Russians and Bulgarians. He continues:—

"Next I was credibly informed that my name had been attached to a sort of round robin or memorial to the world at large on the subject of the atrocities by Cossacks and Bulgarians, of which I had never even heard, the authorities well knowing that I was very dubious about such atrocities altogether, although I regret to say that since then I have had good evidence that some women and children have been wounded with lance thrusts, but the victims who have come under my immediate notice admitted, under very sharp cross-examination, that the hurts were all got during the fight. I hear of other cases at Rasgrad and elsewhere, but cannot speak for any but those at Shumla."

first left entirely unmolested in person and in property by the Turks.[1]

At the same time something like an exodus of the Turkish population took place, though not a few of the Turkish inhabitants remained, or returned to their dwellings after a brief hiding.

> As the Russians advanced, the Bulgarians began at once to pillage the houses left by the Turks, but nothing worse occurred within the Russian lines. The pillagers were checked, scolded, and even beaten by the Russians, to their great astonishment. . . . In some cases even north of the Balkans, they drove Turkish men, women, and children out of their villages.—*Letter in T.* Dec. 1st.[2]

> Constantly accompanying Cossacks and other Russian cavalry in reconnaissances on the front of the Rustchuk army, I never noticed even any disposition to be cruel. . . . I do not aver, remember, that atrocities were not committed on fugitive Turks; but not by the Russians While the Turks yet remained in their entirety in the mixed villages, the Bulgarians did not dare to meddle with them. Nor would they venture to interfere with remnants remaining behind from the general exodus, because they knew the terms of the Emperor's proclamation, and were afraid to be thus actively vindictive. But reprisals were not to be apprehended from Turks 'on the run,' encumbered with wives, children, and household substance: there was little danger that any brutality perpetrated on these forlorn fugitives should reach the ears of the Russians; and the Bulgarians in places questionless hardened their hearts and fell on with bitter currish venom. But north of the Balkans, at least, Cossack lances and Russian sabres wrought no barbarity on defenceless men, women, and children. The Russian of my experience is instinctively a humane man, with a strong, innate sense of the manliness of fair play. The Turkish prisoners I have ever seen well and even considerately treated.—*A. Forbes, 19th Cent.* Nov. 1877.

On the other hand, this first forbearance of the Turks towards the Christians who were slipping from their grasp appears to have been entirely exceptional, and it was soon noted that the Turks were giving rein to their fury against the Bulgarian inhabitants of the Lom valley, on the fringe of the district occupied by the Russians.[3] Moreover it is quite clear that the Turks, in their mode of fighting, deliberately set at naught those "laws of war" by which civilised nations endeavour, for the mitigation of human

[1] Mr. Forbes considers that the Turks committed a grave error in strategy in not laying the country waste before the invaders (art. in *19th Cent.* Nov. 1877). Compare *D. N. War Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 238.

[2] From a military correspondent lately with the Russian army.

[3] *D. N. War Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 286.

suffering, to prevent the infliction of death or wounds except as necessary means to break down military resistance.

> "We give fair warning that we will neither ask nor give quarter; that we will, *more nostro*, torture, chop, hack, and mutilate our wounded enemies, encumber ourselves with no prisoners, despise such finicalities as flags of truce." . . . This intimation the Turks did not make, but they have consistently acted according to its literal terms. I have myself seen great clumps of mutilated Russian dead on battle-fields. I have watched, without the need of a glass, the Bashi Bazouks swarming out after an unsuccessful attack on the part of the Russians, and administering the *coup de grâce* with fell alacrity, under the eyes of the regulars in the sheltered trenches. This style of fighting is working its inevitable result on the Russian soldier, who hesitates to face this grim additional casualty of the battle-field.—*A. Forbes, 19th Cent.* Nov. 1877.

> On the day when the Shipka Pass was taken by General Gourko there was to be seen a strange spectacle. Within a couple of hundred yards were two groups of men; on this side Turks, on that Russians. The Turks were prisoners, guarded with all care, but treated with mercy and almost tenderness. Those of them who were wounded were under the hands of Russian surgeons who were dressing their wounds with every care. And there were surgeons enough for the task because they had no Russian wounded to attend to. Not one. Every man who had fallen under the fire of the Osmanli the day before, when the attack had been repulsed, lay in that other group headless and hideously mangled. —*Letter in T.* Dec. 1st.[1]

About the middle of August the German Government addressed a remonstrance to the Porte concerning the violation of the Geneva Convention by the Turkish troops,[2] a step in which it was shortly joined by that of Austria.[3]

> [The Emperor] is described as being in a state of indignation which does honour to his feelings as a man; and it is more or less directly at his suggestion that Germany has taken the grave step about which I telegraphed you some of the details last evening. I need not say that nothing of the nature of a threat has been expressed. The theory on which Germany proceeds . . . is that any violation of the Convention of Geneva by a belligerent is an offence against all the parties to that treaty as well as against the other belligerent. Any neutral consignatory Power has a right, therefore, to insist that the belligerents keep their faith.—*Berlin Correspondent, D. N.* Aug. 23rd.

[1] From a military correspondent lately with the Russian army.
[2] *Turkey*, i. 1878, No. 259.
[3] *Ibid.* No. 312.

This incident is noteworthy from the point of view of the International Jurist.

> "For the first time, as I believe, in history, they have received from Germany, from the German Government, an official rebuke for the outrages committed by their army.—*Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden*, Sept. 2nd.

There seems no room for doubt that the first crossing of the Balkans by the Russian force under General Gourko was the occasion for the perpetration of most frightful atrocities; first, by the Bulgarians upon the Mahometan population, while the Russian arms were in the ascendant, and afterwards by the Turks upon the Bulgarians in the districts evacuated by the retreating Russians.[1]

> The very first day Gourko's column issued from the Hainkoi Pass, the smoke of burning villages began to deface the landscape outside the Russian lines. As we marched on Kesanlik we began to see bodies of Bulgarian peasants lying in the fields with their throats cut, and shortly after the whole country outside the Russian supports became the scene of mutual slaughter and burning. The devil was let loose, and I should be sorry to judge whether he reigned highest in the hearts of Turks or of Bulgarians.—*Letter in T.* Dec. 1st.[2]

> Let me say a few words of what was virtually the civil war between the Turks and Bulgarians, which fringed the edges of General Gourko's operations across the Balkans. I speak, it is true, from hearsay evidence, but there could be no better nor more direct hearsay evidence. The Bulgarians begged arms of the Russians and received them; then, hot with the fell memories of last year, and conscious that Russians were with and for them, they fell on the Turks with the most ruthless reprisals. . . . All the Turks are reported as having done on their re-occupation of the districts, the Turkish grip on which was temporarily let go by reason of Gourko's raid, is on credible evidence not one whit more barbarous than was the conduct of the Bulgarians towards the Turks when Gourko's star was in the ascendant. The barbarian has acted like a savage in his reprisals; the Christian acted equally like a savage in what were virtually his reprisals for what happened a year previously.—*A. Forbes, 19th Cent.* Nov. 1877.

c. The Exodus of the Mahometan Population.—When, after the fall of Plevna, the final Russian advance took place across the Balkans and upon Adrianople, there was a great exodus of a panic-stricken Mahometan population fleeing before the invaders. This flight of a helpless crowd in the depth of winter was accompanied

[1] The editor of the *D. N. War Correspondence* (vol. i. p. 278) speaks of Eski-Zagra as "a name which will call up memories more horrible than those of Batak. See *post*, p. 245. [2] From a military correspondent lately with the Russian army.

by scenes of the most heart-rending description. We read of old men, women, and children perishing for want of food, or lying frozen to death in the snow by the roadside.[1]

The operations of war which bring about misery of this kind may perhaps be even worse in their effects, as measured by the total amount of human suffering, than even the resort to those fiendish cruelties and outrages which were on all hands recognised as direct violations of the code of civilised warfare, and which were spoken of as "atrocities." But the two cases stand on a very different footing. Still, a general, whose strategy involves such results to a non-combatant population as those which befell the fugitive Mahometans, incurs a very heavy responsibility in the eyes of the civilised world.

Thus the sufferings of the fugitive population became a count in the indictment against Russia.

> We cannot quit the subject without pointing out that the whole of this misery might have been prevented, and is purely gratuitous. Had Russia been content to conclude an armistice as soon as Turkey begged for mercy through this country, not a woman or child need have made that terrible journey; and the hundred thousand victims of an almost unparalleled exodus would still be alive in their homes. But Russian ambition and her thirst for military glory was not yet satisfied. . . . Alexander II. and his generals knew that thousands of women and children would be sacrificed to their lust for the appearance of a triumph. But they never faltered in their settled purpose. Russia entered Bulgaria and Roumelia as a liberator. She will leave them as a butcher and a scourge. Let us be thankful that England has not participated in her crime. Let us also hasten to do our best to alleviate its fearful consequence.—*St.* Jan. 25th, 1878.

On the other hand the *Daily News* correspondent speaks of Suleiman Pasha as responsible for the exodus of the Turkish population as he ordered it, telling the population they would be massacred by the Russians if they remained.[2]

The flight of the Mahometan population was, no doubt, to a great extent, the result of panic fear. In the bitter war of reprisals

[1] See *D. N. War Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 381 and following. The *Times* (Jan. 25th) notes that more than 80,000 fugitives had already arrived at Constantinople, and that its Pera correspondent states that others are coming by thousands a day.

[2] *D. N. War Correspondence*, vol. ii. pp. 382 and 393. One correspondent also speaks of some of the fugitives having been stopped and turned back by the Russian cavalry (p. 392).

Mr. Layard reports (March 15th) that the Grand Duke Nicholas refused to permit the refugees who belonged to towns not occupied by the Russian troops to return to their homes, as they would be at the mercy of the Bulgarians.—*Turkey*, xlii. 1878, No. 6.

which had set in between them and the Bulgarians, the former now felt themselves the weaker party; and it appears only too certain that, as before, when General Gourko first crossed the Balkans, so now again, the infuriated Bulgarians were in very many instances guilty of massacre, pillage, and outrage. Infuriated they were, not only by the memory of past wrongs, but also by the raids to which they were still subject. Moreover, in the districts occupied by the Turkish forces, the hand of the governing Turks was heavy upon them to the end.[1]

Whatever the cause may have been, whether it was from sheer inability to take the necessary measures of precaution, or from a culpable supineness and lack of foresight, or, again, from a still more blameworthy indifference verging on connivance, it seems clear that the Russians quite failed to afford any effectual protection to the Mahometan population, or to restrain the excesses of the Bulgarians, many of whom it appears they had themselves furnished with weapons taken from the Turks.[2]

[1] A letter from Slivno (Dec. 24th) speaks of more than 5,000 Bulgarian women and children from the devastated villages in the neighbourhood wandering destitute in the town and perishing from hunger and from cold. The writer adds:—"The prisons are full of innocent Bulgarians, from the town as well as from the neighbouring villages, and almost every day about half a dozen of them are hanged. Since Suleiman Pasha passed through Slivno (toward the end of September) nearly 1,000 persons have been hanged in the midst of the town. . . . On the day on which he had to leave the town, in order to make his departure as triumphant as possible, he commanded to be hanged in the street through which he had to pass thirty-five Bulgarians at once. Such was the triumphant gate through which the famous general thought he ought to pass."—*D. N. War Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 408.

One writes of the incidents which accompanied the flight of the Turkish population in January, 1878, "It seemed to have been one long battle between the peasants of both races, in which the dead were counted equally for each." Again, we read of the bodies of Bulgarian peasants with terrible wounds, or "mutilated as only the Turks know how to mutilate;" of Bulgarians cut down in a massacre which numbered 136 victims, and of plundering by the fugitives (*Ibid.* pp. 385, 388).

Another correspondent forwards an account of terrible atrocities perpetrated on the Greek population of Visa by a body of Bashi-Bazouks, Zeibecks, and Circassians (*Ibid.* pp. 519-26).

[2] Mr. Calvert writes from Philippopoli on Jan. 20th, 1878:—"When remonstrated with regarding the lawlessness which the Bulgarians are allowed to indulge in, the majority of the Russian officers endeavour to palliate the fact by drily remarking that it is only in the nature of just reprisals."—*Turkey*, xlii. 1878, No. 7, enclosure 1.

One of the *D. N.* correspondents writes:—"Perhaps it is too much to expect of the Russians to secure good order in the hundreds of villages where Turks and Bulgarians live as neighbours; but it seems a little inconsistent, to put it very mildly, that the result of a war made ostensibly to prevent massacres, should be to excite these wholesale slaughters, and that the Russian military Government should be less effective than the lax and irregular system which it has superseded. Of course, the Turkish peasants are now in great fear of the Bulgarians, for the latter are all armed, many of them with weapons taken by the Russians from the Turks and given to the Bulgarians, and the former are without means of defence.—*D. N. War Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 501.

It would be a mistake, however, to regard the Mahometan population as entirely peaceful and non-combatant. Not only did the refugees harry and plunder as they fled, but during the advance of the Russian army the cavalry encountered a determined resistance from the armed villagers or from the fugitives.

Moreover the Russian army of occupation seems for a long time to have been harassed by a desultory warfare, in the course of which some Mahometan villages were attacked and burnt by the Russian troops.[1] This desultory warfare, kept up for the most part by the refugees, became known as "The Rhodope Insurrection."[2]

d. The Rhodope Commission.—An International Commission visited the Rhodope district in July and August, 1878, charged to inquire into the condition and sufferings of the emigrant population.[3]

A divergence of opinion soon occurred. The Russian delegate contended that the Commission was exceeding its scope, at the same time protesting that he attached no belief to the atrocious misdeeds attributed by the refugees to the Russian troops.

A report, of which Mr. Fawcett remarked that it contained the substance of the *procès-verbaux*, while both his colleagues and himself had done their best to soften everything that related to acts alleged or proved against the Russian army,[4] was signed by the English, French, Italian and Turkish Commissioners. The other members of the Commission refused to adopt it.[5]

A great catastrophe which occurred at Hermanli during the Russian advance upon Adrianople in January, figures largely in the

[1] See *Turkey*, xlv. 1878, No. 9, and enclosure 1 in No. 12.

[2] The Marquis of Salisbury telegraphs from Berlin to Sir H. Layard on July 2nd, 1878, that Count Schouvaloff had informed him that if the insurgents ceased hostilities the Russian troops would not prevent them from returning to their villages, and would abstain from any act of repression.—*Turkey*, xlv. 1878, No. 1.

[3] See *Turkey*, xlix. 1878. The following Commissioners were appointed by the respective embassies :—

Austria-Hungary	Colonel Raab.
England	Mr. Fawcett.
France	M. Challet.
Russia	M. Basily.
Italy	M. Graziani.
Germany	M. Müller.

Subsequently two delegates of the Porte appeared and took part in the proceedings.

[4] *Ibid.* i. p. 108.

[5] It was afterwards said that the Italian Commissioner had withdrawn his signature, but it appears this impression arose from the circumstance that, as a matter of form, separate reports in identic terms by the English, French, Italian, and Turkish Commissioners were substituted for one signed by them collectively.—*Turkey*, l. 1878.

Portions of a separate report sent by Colonel Raab appear in *Turkey*, lii. 1878.

charges which were brought against the Russian army by the Rhodope Commission.

The incident was represented by the report of the Commission in the following light:—

> According to an account which we have heard from the lips of several thousands of individuals, the invading army, either by the force of circumstances, or possibly by chance, found before it this compact mass of fugitives, who were endeavouring to gain the mountains (the Balkans, as the peasants said), carrying with them on "arabas" their families—old men, wives, children, and such effects as they had been able to preserve from the cupidity of the conquerors; and this large mass of individuals driven at the point of the bayonet, when once concentrated and crowded together in the gorge of Hermanli, was shot down, massacred, and drowned in the Maritza and the Ourloudéré. More than 2,000 children were thrown into the river by the mothers themselves, driven wild by terror, and believing this death to be gentler for them than that which they would receive at the hand of the enemy.—*Turkey*, xlix. *1878, p. 103.*

It appears however probable that the catastrophe which undoubtedly occurred at Hermanli was one which must be attributed to the senseless resistance and the unreasoning panic of the fugitives themselves. The *Daily News* Correspondent gives the following account of the matter:—

> When the Russian cavalry came in sight of the bivouac there were one or two battalions of Turkish infantry stationed there, as rearguard, but they dispersed and retired with little attempt at resistance, and a squadron was sent into the great assembly of waggons to find out what it was. They rode on without receiving a single shot until they were right alongside, and within a very few paces of the train of arabas occupying the road, when from behind these waggons, out from under the rude coverings, and from all sides came a rattling volley, which emptied some saddles. Then it became evident that ferocious resistance was to be made, so this squadron retired, and preparations were made to attack the collection of waggons, for it sheltered not only the rearguard, but also no one knew how many armed peasants; but before the attack began in earnest the panic caught in the bivouac and spread like wildfire. The immense band of refugees ran away with the soldiers to the mountains, leaving cattle, carts, and all their movables which they could not seize upon at the moment.
>
> The cause of the panic was the appearance of Skobeleff's cavalry in the valley of the Maritza, in front of the bivouac. The result of it was doubtless the death of thousands upon thousands of Turkish peasants, who are now in the mountains without clothing or food. Still, another result of the flight is the enrichment of all the Bulgarians in the neighbourhood, for the

> smoke of the first firing had not cleared away when these ever-watchful individuals pounced down upon all the cattle the soldiers did not drive off, and carried away hundreds of carts laden with plunder.—*D. N. War Correspondent*, vol. ii. p. 391.

The *procès-verbaux* of the sittings of the Rhodope Commission are filled with statements of persons who appeared before the Commission imputing outrages of the blackest nature to the Russian troops. But from the mode in which the spokesmen were selected, the absence of verification or cross-examination, and above all, the absolute impossibility of reconciling their statements with the testimony of the Englishmen who had accompanied the Russian army, no reliance can be placed upon them.[1]

In the winter session of 1878 the English Government gave notice of a proposal for a grant in aid of the sufferers in the Rhodope district; but a day or two afterwards Sir Stafford Northcote announced that it was not his intention to proceed with the motion, and the matter seems to end there.

e. Taunts against the Anti-Turkish Party.—We catch an echo of the recriminatory charges of "atrocities" brought against the invading army, in the taunts which were directed against the "violet" party at home.

> Those who denounced "Bulgarian atrocities," and incited, in the cause of humanity, one of the most cruel and unrighteous of wars, are now silent.—*Layard to Salisbury*, July 24th, 1878.[2]
>
> *Mr. Gladstone* complained of Mr. Layard's strictures, and pointed out that, for his own part, he had caused a letter to be addressed to the Bulgarian Christians, stating that cruelty on the part of Christians was as bad, or worse than, on the part of Mahometans.—(*H. of C.* Dec. 16th, 1878.)[3]

[1] See *Spectator*, Aug. 31st, Nov. 16th and 23rd, 1878, for criticisms of the accusations brought against the Russians.

Mr. Gladstone contrasted the Rhodope Commission with Mr. Baring's inquiry, which commanded absolute credence and carried the greatest weight. "But, on the contrary, no sooner had the report of the Rhodope Commission been published than it became the subject of the most severe criticism" (*H. of C.* Dec. 16th, 1878).

Lord Elcho complained of the difficulty in getting an answer to the question whether the Government believed or not in the trustworthiness of the report.

Mr. Farrer Herschell said he had gone very carefully into the matter. Nothing could be less chivalrous than to vent any ill-feeling they might have against Russia by too great eagerness to believe reports against her troops. The evidence was not of such a nature as they themselves would be willing to be condemned on (*H. of C.* Dec. 17th, 1878).

[2] *Turkey*, xlv. 1878, No. 12.

[3] Compare Mr. Gladstone's speech at Hawarden (*D. N.* Sept. 3rd, 1877) in which he said he was too painfully convinced that many outrages had been committed on Mussulmans and Mussulman women and children, and proceeded to denounce that conduct of the Bulgarians, and of any Russians that might have joined in it.

The next night in reply to Lord Elcho, who taunted the Opposition with inconsistency, Lord Hartington said

> the warm interest which had been felt by members on the Opposition side in the Bulgarian atrocities was due to the fact that they felt that those atrocities, committed by the Turkish authorities, ought to have exercised a strong influence upon the policy of this country; but he did not see how that policy could be affected by Lord Elcho's proposal.—*H. of C.* Dec. 17th, 1878.

As has been already observed [1] the public mind had become to a certain extent surfeited with tales of horror. It would be too much, perhaps, to say that familiarity had bred indifference; still, the recitals failed to shock, as they had done at first.

Not a few may have become doubtful of the utility of protests, and despairing of the possibility of arriving at the truth amidst conflicting charges and counter charges; and these may well be excused for refusing to dwell upon a repulsive subject.

§ 5. *Influences affecting Public Opinion.*

a. The Gladiatorial Spectacle.—During the lull of the Conditional Neutrality the course of the campaign was one of the chief influences operating on the course of opinion at home.

People at first expected that both European and Asiatic Turkey would be eaten up at a mouthful. The "red" newspapers at first dwelt on the impending approach of the Russians to India. The little way made by the Russians had probably more to do with the subsidence of this outcry than Lord Salisbury's advice about large-scale maps.

When the crossing of the Danube was at last effected, and General Gourko appeared south of the Balkans, attention was at once drawn to the question of Constantinople and the Straits. The movement of the fleet back to Besika Bay, and the strengthening of the English garrisons in the Mediterranean, and the rumours of further military expeditions which then occurred, are probably connected with the same events. But with the check which the Russians encountered at Plevna, General Gourko's expedition dwindled from an advance upon Constantinople into a mere raid. It soon became manifest that the war would be a long and severe one, and speculations on the probability of a second campaign

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 87.

were rife. The English Government were relieved from the importunity of those who had been insisting that immediate military measures must be taken to save Constantinople; and, on the other hand, those who feared lest in this way occasion would be found to involve England in the war against Russia, saw with something like relief that the critical time was postponed.

Meanwhile the interest of the gladiatorial conflict overshadowed for some all other considerations, and a craving for exciting events seemed to be growing up. The wonderful war correspondence of the English newspapers, especially of the *Daily News*, and pre-eminently the accounts telegraphed day by day hot from the battle-field of the Shipka, while yet the event hung in doubt;—accounts which told how the hard-pressed Russian troops, on whose steadfastness everything depended, had so far held their own, but left the issue of the great fight still doubtful—such narratives as these enabled the public at home to indulge their craving to the full.

One effect of the contemplation of the war, as if it were a mere gladiatorial show, was to bring out the "school-boy notion" of sympathy for Turkey as the smaller combatant gallantly fighting against odds.

> Already we may observe among certain classes in this country the symptoms of a growing mood of mind very like that which prevailed here during the American civil war. There is the same talk about the small and heroic people, oppressed and invaded by the bigger, but less heroic, noble, and gentlemanlike people. There is the same acclamation of the bravery and the marvellous successes of the smaller combatant. . . . There is also the same sentimentalism shrilly protesting against sentiment; the same voice crying out in one sentence that we must only think of our own interests on pain of being branded as sentimental, and in the next sentence beseeching us to remember the heroism and other gifts and graces of the lesser combatant, and the monstrous hypocrisies and general wickedness of the greater. — *D. N.* July 16th.

b. Consequences of a Russian Defeat.—At the same time the unexpected vigour shown by the Turks gave rise to reflections of quite an opposite kind. What would be the consequences supposing Europe should be confronted with the phenomenon of *victorious* Turks?

It had been noted that the first effect of the Russian invasion was to improve the position of the Provincials.

> [The Turks] are not made more brutal, but more prudent under the pressure of coercive measures; and the safety of the subject populations under their rule is now, as Mr. Gladstone intimates, almost in proportion to their nearness to or distance from the Russian armies.—*D. N.* May 22nd.

But it was noted too that the Russian generals were hampered in their strategy by the necessity of not abandoning districts they had once occupied, lest the inhabitants who had welcomed them should be exposed to the savage vengeance of the Turks.[1]

Already Gourko's raid to the south of the Balkans had exposed many of the Christian population to a terrible revenge, and not a few in England shuddered to think what would happen if the Turks poured over the Shipka down into the quadrangle held against them by the Russian armies.

> [Supposing Russia were compelled to make peace on the basis of the *status quo*, what would then be the condition of Eastern Europe?] The Turk would be unfettered master there as he was three hundred years ago. [The writer refers to an account given by the *Times* correspondent at Bucharest of the massacre at Eski-Zagra after Gourko's "Bulgarian Legion" was driven out.[2]]
>
> That scene would be repeated throughout Bosnia and the Herzegovina and Old Servia and all Bulgaria, over Thessaly and Epirus and Roumelia and Crete, wherever the population had shown a desire to rise, and wherever it was convenient to plant the Asiatic irregulars, who had proved themselves so useful as terrorists, and who, therefore, must be indulged in sport of the kind they love to their hearts' content. [But it may be said English interests would be safe and there would be peace.] Is it so, indeed? How many hours would a Sultan, untrammelled by fears of European resistance, endure the quasi-independence of Egypt—surely a province of the Khalifate if there is one in the world—or the danger which arises to his rule from the importance of the Suez Canal? Why should six million sterling a year, which might be transmitted to Constantinople, go to rascally Giaour bondholders, to whom the Khalif had given no pledge? . . . What would there be to fear when the only army that could be brought up to attack Turkey when defying all Europe had been defeated with discredit? Turkey victorious would be a positive danger to England.—*Spec.* Aug. 18th.

c. Sir Stafford Northcote's "Bit of Blue."—While the "red" journals in England were never tired of dwelling on the tremendous

[1] See *D. N. War Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 364.

[2] The terrified inhabitants endeavoured to follow, but Circassians occupied the road to Kezanlik, and the Turks set a guard round the town so that none might escape, and then began a scene of fiendish cruelty, the details of which could never be published. Neither age or sex was spared; and death was not the worst injury inflicted, for the Turks well know how to make men, women, and children long for oblivion before they accord it.—*Bucharest telegram, T.* Aug. 14th.

slaughter of Plevna and the Shipka as another proof of the awful wickedness of the war upon which the Czar had entered, the deadlock to which the Russian armies had been brought gave rise to a few ineffectual suggestions for English mediation, and faint hints that both sides had done enough for honour. The notion that something ought to be done to put a stop to the slaughter was beginning to thrust out of sight the necessity of putting the provinces on a more satisfactory basis as an indispensable condition of a permanent settlement.

In the first week of September the *Times* lamented the bloody war, and talked somewhat vaguely of intervention.

> The *Spectator* deprecates the attempt made on Wednesday in so able and thoughtful a paper as the *Daily News* to convince the world that the time has come for peacemaking between Russia and Turkey.—(Sept. 29th).[1]
>
> *Sir S. Northcote* spoke of the hope that both parties, having placed themselves high on the pinnacles of military reputation, might see their way to a settlement as the only bit of blue sky he ventured to see at present in the Eastern Question.—*At Exeter*, Oct. 8th.

d. The Turkish Apologists.—Still it was hardly seriously doubted that the Turkish defence would eventually collapse, and that then, unless the Porte should speedily agree with their adversary, the question whether England should depart from her neutrality to resist the Russian advance upon Constantinople would have to be faced.

Thus, in the meantime, efforts were made by those who were eager to rush to the assistance of Turkey, and by those who deprecated any such action, to prepare for the renewal of the struggle for the guidance of the course of the country. Argumentative and *ad captandum* appeals to Public Opinion took the place of the attempt to control the course of the Executive.

Thus the truce of the Conditional Neutrality was, in a sense, a time of controversy, though hardly one of conflict.

We get, on the one hand, the Emancipation policy advocated retrospectively as what might have been, and with the thought that perhaps the lost opportunity might once more return; and, on the other hand, we have the newspapers which were favourable to Turkey dwelling on topics calculated to excite hostility to Russia,

[1] Article entitled "Premature Peace-making."

the Russian advance in Asia, the danger to Constantinople and the Straits.

The *Daily Telegraph* insisted with iteration on the enormous wickedness and hypocrisy of the Czar, who would have it believed his only wish had been to benefit Bulgarians, but who now was bent on carrying fire and sword into Asia and beyond the Balkans.[1]

> The *Spectator* speaks of the exultations in which our pro-Turkish papers indulged in the early part of the week on the so-called successes of the Turks, and of the invectives against the awful wickedness of the Czar in inflicting all this suffering for no purpose, and goes on to say that violent and silly homilies are written to prove that the Czar has not only blundered, but committed the most unpardonable of sins in commencing war for which he was not properly prepared.—(Sept. 22nd.)

e. Platform and Press Utterances.—Meanwhile the Cabinet was left free from Parliamentary criticism and from any pressure from active out-of-door agitation. Still, the Ministry were in the position of men who were carefully and suspiciously watched. They were watched from one quarter lest Lord Beaconsfield's influence should get the upper hand, while in the opposite direction attacks began to appear against those colleagues of his who were regarded as holding him in check.

Although the active conflict at home was thus suspended, the Eastern Question continued the all absorbing topic of public interest. Public men were expected to allude to it every time they opened their mouths. The newspapers continued full of the subject. It was discussed in its every bearing in a great number of important magazine articles.

> The *Economist* compares the position of the section of the Liberal party which accepts Mr. Gladstone as its leader with that of the Abolitionists in the United States before the Civil War. They were charged, and in a certain sense charged truly, with being bad citizens, inasmuch as they subordinated the interests of the Union to the interests of humanity. But it was this very circumstance that made them so formidable a force in American politics. The Government may conceivably be of opinion that no such sentiment as dislike to a war which can even incidentally benefit the Turks, exists in any appreciable amount. But the action taken in the constituencies on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions points to a different conclusion. After every suggested

[1] This seems to represent an invading army as a thing like a poultice to be applied locally to a sore, instead of a means of coercion by which pressure is brought to bear upon the enemy until his reluctance to assent to the terms demanded of him is overcome. It is perhaps significant that the *Daily Telegraph* thought the argument good enough to dwell upon.

deduction has been made, it seems almost certain that there is, to say the least, a large minority of Englishmen who would resent and resist the giving of aid to the Turks, no matter what advantage might accrue to British interests from so doing. This is a condition which those who urge the Government to resist the further advance of Russia do not seem to take into account.—(June 23rd.)

The *Spectator* notes in the Czar's proclamation to the Bulgarians issued immediately after the crossing of the Danube, a certain unctuousness of tone which will doubtless irritate English opinion, but it is the habitual style of the Russian Court, which knows that the strongest bond among its subjects is their Christianity.—(June 20th.)

The *Daily Telegraph* notes that Lord Derby's despatch[1] has been eagerly misrepresented as an indorsement of the policy of total abstinence.—(July 6th.)

On Tuesday a deputation waited on the Chancellor of the Exchequer from the Conservative Organisation at Manchester, to express their confidence in the Government, especially as regards its colonial and foreign policy. [Sir Stafford Northcote's reply was couched in cautious language, and there is nothing to object to in it but his reference to the "single mind."] That the Cabinet are earnestly and conscientiously (though not very effectively) trying to do their duty, we believe, but certainly not with a single mind. There is one mind of the Prime Minister, and another mind of the Secretary for India and his friends, and the two minds alternate, with no good result to the country.—*Spec.* July 14th.

[We are in the presence of a great crisis in English history. By a dexterous use of events manufactured by her statesmen, or] obligingly fashioned to her hands by the clamour of a suicidal faction among ourselves—[Russia] has now come nearer than ever before to the goal of her immemorial ambition. Encamping an enormous host of armed men in Roumania with insolent defiance of European treaty law, she has forced the barrier of the Danube [and has 40,000 men south of the Balkans]. All this because her crafty diplomatists managed to bring Europe to a deadlock, and to get the common sense and courage of England muzzled by sentimentalists. . . . The upshot is that never before, since the "Eastern Question" arose, were the Russians so near the realisation of their design. That design, beyond all doubt and denial, is to enter Constantinople, which the British people stand ready to declare they must not and shall not enter. . . . Happily our agitators of the autumn are now to a great extent silenced by the horrible barbarities of their allies, and the Cabinet has still time and means to forbid the occupation of Constantinople. Nothing is lost yet, if the spirit and will to act as becomes English states-

[1] "The Charter of English Neutrality," *ante*, p. 200.

men be not lost. . . . The too near approach of the Czar's legions to Constantinople should be declared a *casus belli* between the Queen's Government and that of the Emperor Alexander, who has protested that Bulgaria alone concerned him. The announcement of this firm policy, with proper steps to make it good, is expected and desired by the vast majority of the English public.—*D. T.* July 21st.

The *Times* says the argument for occupying Gallipoli is plausible, and in certain circumstances it might be irresistible. But no arguments can hide the importance of such a step as the landing of an English force on any part of Turkish soil, and it could be justified by nothing but overwhelming necessity. The Government would be expected therefore, to give overwhelming proofs that such an expedition was necessary; and the country will be relieved if the Chancellor of the Exchequer should give the assurance to-night that there is no present necessity for sending the troops farther than Malta.—(July 23rd.)

The *Morning Post* accepted the determination of the Government [1] as a proof that when British interests are menaced, as they now are, we are ready to send forward a vanguard of the army which may be ultimately required for their protection. The fleet alone may not be able to preserve Constantinople and enforce the neutrality of the Bosphorus, for if our ironclads were anchored in the Golden Horn a hostile force in possession of Gallipoli might by means of torpedoes and batteries ensnare them as in a trap.—(July 23rd.)

The *Daily Telegraph* advocates the occupation of Gallipoli in expectation of the immediate capture of Adrianople. We shall not be able to enter the Straits when the Russians have sown them with torpedoes.—(July 23rd.)

The 3,000 [troops despatched to Malta] are merely a vanguard. What was academic discussion and sentiment yesterday may be treason to-morrow.—(July 24th.)

To humour this or that lagging colleague the Queen's advisers seem too much inclined to "run with the hare and cry with the hounds," undoing in words what they do in deeds, and no sooner animating the country by a proof of vigilance and boldness, than disheartening it by a Parliamentary explanation. If this be caution, we must tell them plainly that it may be pushed too far. . . . . We must point out that it is better for a Government to carry the country with it than even the most respected and valued colleague. If there be in the Ministry at present any member half-hearted about the interests of Great Britain, doubtful as to the intentions of Russia, or hampered with ecclesiastical proclivities when the verities of Empire are at stake, he should make up his mind, and act with dignity and decision for or against his country. . . . As to any further difficulty with St. James's Hall,

[1] To despatch troops to Malta, *ante*, p. 219.

it is perfectly obvious that the pro-Russian party has lost whatever influence it ever possessed. The disgraceful insincerity it has shown about the Russian atrocities, the palpable self-seeking on the part of its leaders, and the awakened anxiety of the nation for our menaced influence in the East, have combined to silence it. . . . It is clear, therefore, that the Government need not any longer trim its expressions and explanations in order to suit these gentlemen, who cannot muster a hundred and fifty votes in the House of Commons. Should they, then, play this undignified game of "cross questions and crooked answers" to indulge the weakness of such associates as cannot see an Imperial crisis until it comes under their very eyes? . . . The honest instincts of the British people chafe at the distrust shown in the intelligence and resources of the country. . . If we can be neutral with ironclads at Besika Bay, we can be just as neutral with engineers and field-guns at Gallipoli. Both mean the same thing, that we will not have the Eastern Question settled over our heads to please the Ritualists or the Russians . . . If we are not at Gallipoli in time the Dardanelles will be shut with torpedoes and earthworks; and the British Government, become a laughing-stock, would be a fitting target for all the bitter wits of Moscow and St. Petersburg. If we are there in time the questions of the destiny of Constantinople and the terms of peace can no longer be settled without the voice of Great Britain. . . Everybody abroad understands this, and at home an immense majority applauds the evident purpose of the Cabinet. We ask them with all loyalty, in the name of British truthfulness, whether it is considered absolutely necessary to encourage the devices of cosmopolitans and cravens by calling Gallipoli a "Mediterranean region."—*D. T.* July 25th.[1]

Are we about to fight Russia, in order to prevent the temporary occupation of Constantinople until a European Congress has decided upon the ultimate ownership or guardianship of that great position? That is the true and only question in regard to this war now before the country, and it is upon this that the public should make up its very reluctant mind. [There is no fear of Russia's annexing Constantinople.] It is only, therefore, to prevent a temporary occupation that we can go there, and the only object of preventing a temporary occupation must be to protect the Turks, [that is, to assure them that in any event] they will be free and masters in the centre of their power. . . Our appearance in Constantinople would and could have no other meaning, unless, indeed, we are prepared to assist in terminating Turkish rule. . . . But, says the newspaper which speaks most clearly the mind of the Premier, we should go to Constantinople merely as "the bailiffs of Europe," prepared to hand over the great capital to any authority upon whom Europe may fix its choice. Very good; then let the Government say so clearly in Parliament. It is certainly not we who should resist that righteous and statesman-

[1] *Ante*, p. 219.

like design. . . . But who believes for one moment that a Government with Lord Beaconsfield at its head would pursue any policy of the kind? He wants to save the only Asiatic State left in Europe, not to destroy it. His sympathy, we do not blame him for it, and he has avowed it in a hundred chapters of his books—is with the Semitic races, and not with the "snub-nosed Saxon" or more snub-nosed Sclav.—*Spec.* July 28th.

[Commenting on a meeting of the Leeds Liberal Association to choose a second Liberal candidate] . . . We are sorry to see that questions of foreign policy seem to have been entirely banished from this meeting. The speakers talked of every subject under the sun except the one which has most interest for nine Englishmen out of ten at the present moment. . . . The Liberals were beaten in 1874 because they had no longer anything to give the country which the country cared to take. They had been lavish of great reforms, and so long as the country wanted great reforms it was glad to keep the Liberals in power. When it ceased to desire great reforms, it looked about to see what else the Liberals had to offer it, and it found nothing but small crotchets. Since that time the Liberal party have been too often engaged in trying to force these discredited wares upon a public which will have none of them. The uprising of the Eastern Question offers them a way of escape from this unworthy occupation, but at Leeds, at all events, they seem very slow to take advantage of it. . . . If the meeting at Leeds is any index, we will not say to the feeling of the electors, but to the views of those who assume to guide the electors, the Liberal oracles are obstinately dumb. In the midst of a European crisis which may yet prove of almost unparalleled importance, their responses only deal with questions of home politics, and as often as not with the least important even of these. . . . It is necessary for all who have at heart the regeneration of the Liberal party to say plainly what they think of those discreditable exhibitions of political flatulence.—*Spec.* Aug. 18th.

There was a small party in the House of Commons in favour of the coercion of Turkey, but he did not believe that by letting slip the dogs of war they could serve the cause of humanity. He asserted that to defend Turkey would be to go to war with Russia, and Russia had behaved well all the way through, and had shown a disposition to follow in the lead of England.—*Mr. Henry Richard.*[1]

There is always in this country—at least, so far as my recollection goes back—there is always a war party. It is found in the press constantly. Unfortunately for the public interests, there is hardly anything that tends so much to enhance the profits of the proprietors of newspapers as a stirring and exciting conflict.

[The neutrality of the Government is not so perfect as it

[1] At the anniversary meeting of the Peace Society (*D. N.* May 23rd).

should be. There is the veto on touching Egypt; further] many people say—I am not quite sure whether the Government have said it in express language, but people believe they mean it—that Russia shall not approach Constantinople. [This is to deprive Russia of ordinary belligerent rights.]

[While Lord Salisbury, at the Conference, was endeavouring by all the means in his power to urge the Turks to make those most moderate concessions which would have contented Russia, and avoided the war] the war party in this country, the war press, the war public men, and that portion of the public which I call the rowdy war party (loud cheers)—there are rowdies among the rich as well as among the poor—all that party were speaking with another voice, and stimulating and encouraging the Turks to resist, thus bringing Turkey to the catastrophe in which she now finds herself (cheers). [The Government, no doubt, had had great difficulties to contend with, but they] might certainly—at least I believe they might—have tamed down what I call the rowdy organs of their press (cheers).

I quote a passage from a recent speech of Lord Derby [1] with a sentiment of the utmost admiration and the fullest concurrence. He says, "We must always remember that the greatest of British interests is the interest of peace" (hear, hear, and cheers).—*Mr. John Bright at Bradford*, July 25th.

There has been a very active, a very noisy, a very determined, and a very unscrupulous war party in the country. They have tried often to make themselves out to be a majority. I feel sure they are not, but I know the danger. We are a very high-spirited nation. For writers to make war in this country all that has to be done is to insult other countries to the point that they reply, and we feel ourselves insulted, and then there is danger of war in England. . . . We know what a courageous battle the Turks are fighting, displaying such bravery as we can hardly avoid admiring, almost forgetting the cause of the struggle. There was a time when concert was possible. . . . No effort on our own part to stop the war would now be successful, and there is no other course as the matter stands than that of neutrality.—*Mr. Forster at Bradford*, Aug. 28th.

Mr. Courtney spoke of past efforts to involve England in war for Turkey. He thought all danger was over now.—*At Liskeard*, about Sept. 20th.

Sir H. Giffard once more took up the position that England was bound to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.—*At Launceston*, Oct. 14th.

I am not satisfied, and I cannot pretend to be satisfied, with the course that has been pursued. I am told that I am responsible for the present war (cries of shame, shame). [But he would submit his Blackheath speech, made when the feeling of the

[1] *Ante*, p. 214.

nation was at the highest, to the judgment of any man. His proposals were to maintain, if possible, the integrity of Turkey, and to secure the local liberties of all subjects, without distinction of religion, in the cruelly-oppressed provinces.] I did not propose that we should go to war. I will tell you now my recommendation and I abide by it. It was that the Powers of Europe should unite together and send their fleets, or a combined portion of their fleets into the Black Sea, and the Sea of Marmora, and the Archipelago, and say to the Turk, "Not a man, not a horse, not a gun, not a shilling, shall pass from Asia to Europe, or from Europe to Asia, for the purpose of carrying on your wars." I said then, and I say now, if that announcement had been made, as it might have been made, to Turkey, not one drop of human blood would have been shed (loud cheers).—*Mr. Gladstone at Nottingham*, Sept. 27th.

Lord Salisbury did not deny there was a war party in the country. There had been *two* war parties. The substance of what was urged on the Government, by some eminent men early in the year, though veiled in careful phraseology, was to take part with Russia in the impending war against Turkey.—*At Bradford, Oct. 11th.*

[Mr. Leatham[1] made] one of those conventional peace speeches which we know so well, and of which we are so thoroughly weary. He was almost as bitter against Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, and the "crusade," as he termed it, of last year, as a model Tory; [but the motive was no doubt desire to counteract the effect of Liberal sympathy with Russia, not to stimulate Tory sympathy with Turkey.]—*Spec.* Nov. 17th.

[What would be the consequence to the dearest interests of England if Germany and Russia in alliance should think fit to parcel out the dominions of the Turkish Empire?] I am not one of those who think that England need shrink from an encounter with any number of enemies who may be banded against her. I would say with our great dramatist,—

> "Come the three corners of the world in arms,
> And we shall shock them."

[Was this great war waged to effect some improvement in two or three Turkish provinces, to confer some local or municipal institutions upon them, or to partition the Turkish territories? Whatever its object, the means resorted to to carry it on were terrible in the extreme.] We may well pray, that the great potentate waging this war will pause, or be led to pause—I will not say made to pause—in the career which has not only laid waste the country he seeks to conquer, but, as it seems, has led to outrages and atrocities without parallel in the history of the world.—*Chief Baron Kelly*, Nov. 9th.[2]

[1] At Huddersfield, Nov. 9th.
[2] In his address to the Lord Mayor in the Court of Exchequer.

Mr. Forster spoke of the misgovernment of the Christian subjects as the real cause of the war, and said no peace would be lasting unless that misgovernment ended. We were still in danger of being dragged into war.

The Marquis of Lansdowne noted that the danger at home was the feeling that because the Turkish soldiers had shown great valour in battle therefore the Turks might be left alone and to reform themselves.—*Colston Dinner* (*Anchor*), Nov. 13th.

Mr. Cave said, notwithstanding the storm of unprecedented violence raised last year, the opinion of all independent men had been that the policy of the Government was the only policy compatible with the true interests of the country.

Mr. Waite said, all that could be done had been done by wise counsels and remonstrances to prevent the bloody and discreditable conflict now raging in Eastern Europe. This was all he believed that the nation, excepting only a few fanatics, desired should be done. What the nation wished was not that Ministers should pursue a Turkish or Russian policy, but an English policy, and he emphatically said that was what the Ministers had done. They had kept England out of the hideous fray, though their counsels for peace had been disregarded.—*Colston Dinner* (*Dolphin*), Nov. 13th.

Mr. Henry Richard, believing that we should endeavour to direct the Legislature to a policy of peace, would join any party advocating peace. We had been between two fires; one party wanted to fight the Turks and the other wanted to fight for them. —*At Merthyr*, Dec. 4th.

The desire to fight (I do not say that it does not exist elsewhere) is almost universal amongst idlers and gossips, fashionable aspirants, and the habitual frequenters of the London burlesques and music halls. The determination to keep at peace is almost universal among the great mass of the population which produces the wealth of this country, and which makes us respected and powerful among nations. My experience is that the division is not, as is generally described, one of class, but of personal habits and character. If you meet a man who does an honest stroke of work on every week day, whether he be manufacturer, or artisan, or tradesman, or barrister, it is ten to one that he wishes his country to leave this quarrel to be fought out by those whom it concerns. If you meet a man who amuses himself for fifteen hours in the twenty-four and sleeps the rest, it is ninety-nine to one but he thinks we should send an ultimatum to Russia as soon as she crosses the Balkans, and that he regards Lord Beaconsfield as a second Chatham, who is robbed of his opportunities by his more timid colleagues.—*Mr. G. O. Trevelyan at Galashiels*, Dec. 14th.

§ 6. *Conflicting Estimates of Public Opinion.*

a. Attempts at Diagnosis.—In the great controversy at home, which, as we have remarked, was in a sense speculative rather than practical, so long as the issue of the campaign hung in doubt, each side claimed for itself to constitute the preponderating opinion of the nation.

Public Opinion had become highly introspective, and was anxious to diagnose itself. Those who held with the "violet" opinions, could urge the consistency of their position with the admitted feeling of the autumn before, the weight of their demonstrations, and the widely representative character of the men who supported them. But though for the most part they held fast to the faith that the reasoned opinion of the country was the same as ever, their confidence in the staunchness of the great mass of opinion which had been roused in the autumn was less absolute, perhaps, than it had been.

> Twelve months ago the sentiments of this country were declared so strongly and positively that all that I may call Turkism was for the time silent; the most chivalrous, ardent, and determined partisan did not venture to open his lips. But you cannot keep up the feeling of a nation for a great length of time at the same high level. The conditions of human nature do not permit it, besides which, selfishness is a more permanently vital principle than the nobler emotions of the human mind. Consequently, as there seemed to be at any rate a partial silence, which was mistaken for acquiescence, the professors of Turkism and the nursers and worshippers of delusions acquired courage and declared that the people of England had changed their minds, that they had been deluded for a moment, but they had now returned to good sense and the cultivation of what was really the only matter at issue—British interests. (Cheers). Now it remains as necessary as ever that you should be on your guard against these delusions. Whatever the issue of the present war, and on that I have my own opinion, rely upon it, that the state of things which existed in Turkey two or three years ago, and which has been only aggravated since, is too unnatural to continue. Peace never can be known in the Turkish Empire until some great blow is struck at oppression. How can you persuade thirteen or fourteen millions of people living together in masses, and forming the population of great districts of country, to submit their property, their domestic peace, their lives—above all, the lives and honour of their wives and daughters—to the licentiousness of every Turk, from the Pasha down to the policeman?—*Mr. Gladstone at Nottingham*, Sept. 27th.

b. The "Daily Telegraph's" Diagnosis.—On the other hand, the *Daily Telegraph* began to publish samples of a mass of correspondence which it professed to be receiving, generally signed by initials, or suggestive *noms de plume.* These were paraded as evidence that the true opinion of the nation was setting strongly in the direction of the "red" policy. Moreover the *Daily Telegraph* now began to affirm that such was the case with the assurance of one who has access to esoteric means of information.[1]

> [A feeling of] extraordinary impatience is manifestly growing up among the nation. Our public correspondence is rendered voluminous with letters calling aloud for plain speaking and resolute action. The recent horrible atrocities perpetrated by the pretended champions of the Gospel of peace and goodwill have utterly sickened popular sentiment.—*D. T.* July 25th.

> For weeks past ever-increasing numbers of letters have been addressed to us offering in various ways material assistance to the Turkish cause in the present war. Their quantity was at last so great and their urgency so pressing that we gave space to certain representative examples of this correspondence, since it had become clear that a genuine manifestation of public opinion was in course of development. The effect of even this limited publicity was at once to open a floodgate of national feeling, and since we first began to print the substance of these communications an extraordinary mass of similar letters has continued to reach us, all expressing in the main a strong sympathy for the invaded Turkish nation so gallantly defending its existence; and also a desire to bear part either in aiding the destitute Mussulman families, succouring the Turkish wounded, or directly and frankly assisting his Majesty the Sultan with a gift of money or even a loan subscribed at nominal interest. The general tenour of this enormous correspondence has shown that the minds of the people are deeply impressed, first, by the fully-revealed injustice and hypocritical pretences of the present invasion of Turkey; next by the valour and devotion of her soldiers; and lastly by the horrible cruelties which the Russian troops have perpetrated on the women and children of the Bulgarian Muslims. The majority of our correspondents evidently regard the Muscovite crusade as stripped bare by this time of all and any Christian sanction in consequence of the conduct of the invaders; while few of them seem to doubt that the real object from the first was not to ameliorate Bulgaria, but to reach Constantinople, and then and there dictate to the Sultan a peace subversive of European treaties and of British interests.

[1] Compare the leading article on "Public Opinion," *D. T.* Dec. 7th, 1878, in which the *Daily Telegraph* claimed something like plenary inspiration. It says its position enables it to gauge Public Opinion. It may not be amiss, it continues, to inform statesmen that Public Opinion has pronounced with Lord Beaconsfield, and that the speeches of the Opposition (on the Afghan war, in the debate on the address) are discreditable.

Holding these views a large number of the writers have mingled compassion for the innocent victims of Russian ambition and intrigue with an ardent wish to carry substantial assistance to the treasury of the Porte, and we may safely say that many hundreds have besought us to become the almoner both of a charitable and of a political subscription.—*D. T.* Aug. 16th.

From about the 9th to the 23rd of August, the *Daily Telegraph* published each day, under the heading "Public Opinion on the War," three-quarters of a column or so of short extracts, with comments of its own, like the following :—[1]

From among the constantly-increasing mass of daily correspondence on the subject of the Russo-Turkish war we extract the pith of those letters which bear most weightily on the Eastern Question and on those British interests which it involves. "Bis dat qui cito dat" says: "Although a poor curate with several children, I would readily offer a guinea in aid of the brave people fighting for national existence against an unscrupulous and hypocritical enemy. It is true that they are directly acting in self-defence, but it is no less true that they are fighting indirectly in aid of 'British interests,' and it does seem to me mean and selfish in the extreme that we should allow them to do so unaided. . . . In the meantime, let the suggestion of 'B. A.' be at once acted on. . . ." Our correspondent's allusion to "B. A.'s" letter needs but brief explanation, it being probably within the memory of most readers that the writer in question suggested the subscription by 1,000,000 Englishmen of a guinea each, in aid of the Turkish cause. . . . "A Lover of Fair Play" will, he says, be happy to contribute his share, as he feels convinced that the Turks are bearing the brunt of what is really intended as an attack upon us. "Anti-Humbug" feels it is almost time that real Christians should find some other name, seeing what has been done in that of Christianity itself by Russia, in the Crimea, in Poland, in Khiva, and lastly in Turkey. "An English Mohammedan" points out that superfluous medical aid has been sent out by Germany and other powerful States to the stronger side, while unfortunate Turkey has been left, in this as in every other particular, to shift for herself. . . . On the subject of our own views, "Semper Eadem" writes: "I trust you will keep on protesting against the inactive and vacillating policy of our Government. Oh for a few men of the old Palmerston stamp—men with English hearts, long heads, and courage!"—(Aug. 9th.)

With scarcely a word of dissent from the general feeling on the topic of the Russo-Turkish war, letters continue to pour in upon us in a daily increasing mass. To avoid repetition, as the concurrence of opinion and of ideas is so frequently expressed in language that varies but little, even verbally, we are compelled to

[1] Somewhat similar extracts were again published by the *Daily Telegraph* in December. *Post*, chap. xvii. § 2.

limit our citations; though in withholding from publication much that is pertinent and suggestive, we call the attention of our correspondents to this obvious reason for passing over very many communications without even a few words of extract. We shall, however, find an abundance of quotable matter in the heap of selected letters now before us.

"Monitor" argues that, whether the Turks eventually win or lose the day, one thing is clear—namely, that England is fast losing her opportunity, and once gone it will be impossible to recover it. . . . Continued offers of subscriptions are accompanied by urgent desires for the formation of an authorised fund. . . . The following is from "A Yorkshireman:" "It will be admitted, I think, even by the calumniators of the Turk, that for a sick man he fights remarkably well—too well for the Russians. His sickness must have been merely functional derangement, and not, as was supposed, organic disease. . . . It is melancholy to think that there are men in high places who would subordinate the best interests of the Empire and the best feelings of the heart to the whimsicalities of sacerdotalism. What are we to think of the self-righteous agitators of last autumn? Why have there not been public meetings, letters in the newspapers, ecclesiastical and ex-Prime Ministerial orations in denunciation of the fearful atrocities now being committed by the Russians? What other conclusion can we come to than that the philanthropical outburst last year was as hollow and insincere as the professions of the Russians themselves?" . . . "W. P." draws attention to the expediency of supporting the Stafford House Fund[1] until a direct war loan or subscription is started. One of the many correspondents adopting the significant *nom de plume*, "A Disgusted Liberal," says: "Although one who has voted always in the interest and for the policy of Mr. Gladstone up to the beginning of the Eastern Question, I am delighted at the suggestion of your correspondent 'B.A.'" . . A correspondent, signing himself "Late Royal Navy," and inclosing his real name and address,[2] offers to send his cheque for five guineas.—(Aug. 11th.)

Letters continue to arrive in shoals on the subject of the war between Russia and Turkey, and the following extracts from the communications of our numerous correspondents will doubtless be read with interest.

"A Real and Consistent Liberal," who forwards his "mite" of £1, asks: "What is to account for the tergiversation and duplicity of a certain section of modern Liberals, falsely so-called? What mystery can explain their Czar-worship, their rampant adulation of the mainstay of despotic rule."—(Aug. 16th.)

[1] For the purpose of aiding sick and wounded Turkish soldiers. The Duke of Sutherland was chairman of the committee.

[2] Are we to conclude that the other generous subscribers *withheld* their real names and addresses?

Compare *Punch's* "Next Subscription List," headed by "One who hates the Russians," 5*s.*; and closed by "Anonymous," £20,186 8*s.* 4*d.*—*Punch*, Oct. 6th, 1877.

We continue to receive vast numbers of letters with regard to the war which Russia is waging against Turkey.

"E. W." says: "I am a member of one of the London Liberal clubs. For years I have been in the habit of looking up to Mr. Gladstone as the honoured leader of our party. But latterly things are changed, and I believe millions of honest Liberals would now support the present Government in preference to seeing a Gladstonian anti-Turkish Ministry in office." . . "An Englishman" writes as follows: "As an Englishman and a Liberal I shall be glad to know whether the experience of other people on the Eastern Question tallies with my own. From the beginning of the agitation last autumn I have been in the habit weekly of speaking to some twenty to fifty comparative strangers, and from first to last during that period—say twelve months, I speak by the card—I have met with but one individual who would not on this question have given his vote most unequivocally in support of the present Government; and what is more, I have been unable to find even the one single individual whose experience in that respect differs from my own. In the exceptional instance first referred to, the gentleman, a solicitor, had the candour to confess that he knew no other of his way of thinking."—(Aug. 21st.)

On August 14th, the *Daily Telegraph* reports an anti-Russian meeting held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, and presided over by Lord Stratheden and Campbell. On the 22nd it published seven letters, four of them bearing the writers' signatures at length.

Sir P. Colquhoun thought that without taking Constantinople, Russia might pass on into Albania and, seizing Corfu, thus obtain an impregnable position in the Mediterranean.—In *D. T.* Aug. 22nd.

The heart of the English people is not now influenced by the wild though eloquent speeches of hysterical statesmen, who have so well preached this "ghastly gospel of coercion" that it is bearing its bitter fruits of carnage, cruelty, desolation, and woe; but responds to your noble efforts on behalf of that Turkish nation, which is fighting for very existence against the lust and greed of Holy Russia.—*The Rev. C. Brock*,[1] in *D. T.* Aug. 22nd.

There can be no doubt that an extreme "red" section of opinion was now gathering some strength; but whatever may be the value to be attached to the correspondence published by the *Daily Telegraph*, there need not be the least hesitation in pronouncing that the diagnosis of the *Telegraph* was untrustworthy, when it represented this extreme "red" section as the preponderating opinion of the country at large.[2]

[1] Dean of Guernsey.

[2] See *ante*, chap. xii. § 7, as to the course and influence of the *Daily Telegraph* generally.

§ 7. *The Conditional Neutrality draws to its close.*

The great Turkish defeat in Asia on October 15th and the fall of Kars were the beginning of the end.

> The *Standard* observed that any signal reverses to the Turkish arms in Bulgaria, following upon the Armenian disaster, must recall us to those duties and responsibilities which for some months past have been suspended.—(Oct. 24th.)
>
> The Government have taken credit, and very justly taken credit, for preserving a policy of neutrality. I would only say that it would be reassuring to the country to know upon what ground the policy of neutrality rests, and what grounds there are for believing that it will be maintained. I hope it does not rest upon the successes which were gained by the Turkish army a few months ago.—*Marquis of Hartington at Glasgow*, Nov. 7th.
>
> It was to be expected that with the fall of Kars we should hear a renewal of those outcries from the more excitable admirers of Turkish domination which have been partially suspended since the reverses at Zevin and Plevna. . . . At present there is no controversy between the people of this country and the Government on the Eastern Question. But if the advice so freely given to Ministers by a small but noisy fraction of their supporters were adopted, there would soon be one of a most formidable character. Mr. Gladstone put the case succinctly in his address delivered at Hawarden last night. He said that as long as the Government observed its "conditional neutrality," the Liberal party would observe a "conditional quietude;" but if the Government departed from its conditional neutrality, the Liberal party would abandon its political quietude, fight like Englishmen, and leave the nation to decide between them. We see no reason, however, why the Government should not be satisfied with a policy which at least meets with general acquiescence.—*D. N.* Nov. 24th.

Meanwhile the expected pretensions of Russia began to be more earnestly canvassed. It was stated that Russia would demand the free passage of the Straits for her ships of war.[1]

> We have all known that this claim would be advanced. . . . Our apprehensions, perhaps, exaggerate the importance of the change; but we are ready to admit that we should not be quite so comfortable in the Levant if Russian ships could cruise about in it as German, French, and Italian ships do, with a power of running up into the Black Sea to refit when necessary. We might for a year or two keep our Mediterranean Squadron in full commission. No civilised Power, however, could make a *casus belli* out of merely possible dangers like this. [The most serious objection we could raise would be that the existing arrangement

[1] *T.* Nov. 5th, St. Petersburg correspondent.

ought not to be altered without the concurrence of the signatory Powers. If we knew beforehand that we should be entirely alone in putting such an objection forward, we should not serve our own interests by insisting upon it. Instead of resisting in principle the free navigation of the Straits, we should direct our attention to the conditions under which it may be safely conceded.]—*T.* Nov. 10th.

If Russia should be allowed to send her fleet from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, England, France, and Germany must equally be permitted to send their fleets from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. It does not follow that this country, at all events, would be a loser by an arrangement which would enable it in certain conditions to blockade the chief ports and arsenals of Russia.—*T.* Nov. 14th.

The abolition of the restriction would affect our interests to the extent that it would admit the navy of another Power into the Mediterranean, and that that Power is the only other European State having, like ourselves, a great Asiatic dominion. . . . We must not, of course, act upon the balmy assumption that we and all the world are always to be friends; and if another navy were to have access to the Mediterranean we should have to make our knowledge of the fact an element of our calculations in providing for our own naval resources. We confess that we have but little faith in artificial and ingenious plans for restricting the belligerent power of growing nations by means of diplomatic documents.—*D. N.* Nov. 21st.

It is not too soon to ask what terms Russia is likely to put forward as those on which she is ready to make peace with Turkey. That her Government is bound to ask for no accession of territory in Europe has long been known.[1] It will, however, be free to insist upon a degree of self-government which will be practically the independence of Bulgaria. The Emperor will also most likely insist on keeping what he is acquiring in Armenia. Further, he will ask for some modification of the Treaty which at present forbids the passage of his ships of war from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. It is on these last two points that English opinion will be most divided. [As to Armenia, the Turkish Government by letting loose hordes of Kurds and Circassians upon the Christians of Armenia] has made it simply impossible for the friends of the Porte to urge that the voice of this country should be raised for the restoration of Ottoman authority in those parts of Asia where it has been overthrown. Were England able and willing to make such a demand, we should be responsible as a community for every massacre of the Christians which would certainly follow such a step. There remains the question of the free navigation of the Bosphorus and the Straits of the Dardanelles. [According to a proposition advanced by a Russian

[1] It will be remembered that the despatches communicating the Russian terms had not yet been made public. See *ante*, chap. xv. § 7.*b*, p. 209.

writer of no special authority, Prince Wassiltchikoff,] the Black Sea belongs exclusively to Russia and Turkey, and therefore they alone should have the right of entrance for ships of war. "The navies of Powers which have no possessions in the Black Sea can have no reason to pass through the Straits except for the purpose of attack and invasion." [No one will hold the Russian Government responsible for nonsense of this kind.] If Russia proposes any change in existing treaties which would give her the right to send war ships from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean she must be prepared to admit the right of other Powers to send their ships into the Black Sea. No other conditions could be listened to for a moment. It may be that such an arrangement would not suit the Russian Government, but if so, the subject cannot be worth mooting. . . . The Russian Government will have to consider all sides of this question, and when it has done so may possibly care less about the change spoken of than it has hitherto seemed to do.—*D. N.* Nov. 26th.

Day by day it became more unlikely that the resistance to the Russian advance would be much longer protracted; and as the crisis visibly approached, indications as to the attitude in which it would find the English Government were eagerly sought for in the speeches which were made from time to time by various Ministers. One of the occasions most anxiously looked for was the Premier's appearance at the Lord Mayor's banquet. The tone of his speech, and his avowal that regard for Turkish interests was a principal reason for England's conditional neutrality, were not calculated to allay anxiety. But the effect was to a great extent counteracted by other Ministerial utterances.

[The policy which the Government have unanimously adopted, and from which they have never swerved, is the policy of conditional neutrality. But that neutrality must cease if British interests are assailed or menaced.] Cosmopolitan critics, men who are the friends of every country save their own, have denounced this policy as a selfish policy. My Lord Mayor, it is as selfish as patriotism. But it is the policy of Her Majesty's Government—a policy which they adopted from the first and which they have all along maintained. . . . My Lord Mayor, there may have been many reasons which may have induced us to adopt that policy; but there was one, and a principal one, to which I will refer. I believe the policy of neutrality on the part of this country was not more for the benefit of England than it was for the benefit of Turkey. For some years it has been a dogma of diplomacy that Turkey was a phrase and not a fact—that its Government was a phantom, that its people was effete. [If that were so, to repeat what occurred in the Crimea would be the greatest error; but Turkey had shown a vigour and resource which proved her right to be recognised

among the Sovereign Powers of Europe.] The independence of Turkey was a subject of ridicule a year ago. The independence of Turkey, whatever may be the fortunes of war—and war changes like the moon—the independence of Turkey is not doubted now. It has been proved by half a million of warriors, who have devoted their lives to their country without pay and without reward. [As to the prospects of peace, he was encouraged not to take a desponding view.] I cannot forget that the Emperor of Russia, with a magnanimity characteristic of his truly elevated character, announced on the eve of commencing this war that his only object was to secure the safety and happiness of the Christian subjects of the Porte (cheers and laughter); and that he pledged his Imperial word of honour on one occasion that he sought no increase of territory.[1] [As the Sultan has declared his readiness to secure the changes which will give to the Christian subjects that safety and that welfare which the Emperor of Russia desires, peace ought not to be an impossible achievement.] —*Lord Beaconsfield at the Guildhall.*

It was noticed that the representative of Turkey was the only ambassador present. The Lord Mayor in proposing the toast of the Foreign Ministers adverted to the absence of many gentlemen who on former occasions had favoured the City of London with their presence, saying that the reason for their absence could be conjectured, but he was certain that in that hall they would have received a very hearty welcome.

[The Premier's] ironical tribute to the heroic and unparalleled disinterestedness of the invaders of Turkey would have had more force if he had recognised some element of good in their enterprise. But Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby, as they listened to their chief, can scarcely have forgotten that the justice of these charges against Turkey was admitted by all the European Powers, including England herself. . . . As the Home Secretary's speech months ago was eminently pacific, so, we are bound to assume, is yesterday's speech of the Prime Minister. If here and there it is somewhat enigmatical, that is merely the result of a rich style, oftener seen in romance than in political discussion.—*T.* Nov. 10th.

[It is a fatal omission that there] is not one word to show that he is making it a prime object of his policy to establish a satisfactory administration in the Provinces of the Turkish Empire; but without this any peace will be hollow, if not iniquitous. As to the interference of this country on behalf of Turkey, it is inconceivable, except on the supposition that we could make ourselves responsible for the future conduct of the Porte and the good government of its subject races.—*T.* Nov. 14th.

[1] *Ante*, p. 211.

> The Prime Minister struck the leading note of yesterday's address by emphasising the fact that the neutrality adopted by the Government, and approved by the nation, was and is "conditional." [He avowed] that England has refrained from interference for Turkey's good, as well as from other considerations. . . . It was a generous eulogy of the heroic people who have so stoutly vindicated their right to exist; a wise and meaning admonition to Russia to bear her own professions in mind; and a fearless renewal of the warning that the neutrality of Great Britain is "conditional" towards the aggressor, and sympathetic towards the assailed and persecuted nation of the Sultan. We believe that the ringing cheers with which these words were received, and the equally hearty approbation which greeted the manly language of the Minister of War, will to-day find their echo near and far throughout the country.—*D. T.* Nov. 10th.
>
> The danger which on the last Lord Mayor's Day was only hypothetical, is now incurred. Russia has embarked in an undertaking which may, even without her intention, involve her in conflict with England. It is idle to deny that the course of the war has brought us nearer to the contingency which was hinted at last year by Lord Beaconsfield.—*St.* Nov. 10th.

On November 28th a deputation comprising, among others, representatives of "the Society for the Protection of British Interests against Russian Aggression in the East," visited the Foreign Office to press the Government "to take active measures on behalf of the Turks to bring about peace between the belligerents." Lord Stratheden and Campbell presented a memorial which contended that Constantinople was in danger.

> *Lord Derby* in his reply vindicated the conduct of the Government in adhering up to that time to their conditional neutrality. He promised due consideration of the remarks of the memorialists on the part of the Government. As to the danger to Constantinople he did not think it imminent. He referred the deputation to what was said in the despatch published at the opening of the war. The Government had spoken in as strong terms as diplomatic usage permits, of the necessity of not allowing Constantinople to pass into other hands than those that now hold it.

Other Ministerial utterances followed:—[1]

> *Sir Stafford Northcote* spoke in general terms of the policy of the Government as aiming at preserving the peace of the country, restoring the peace of Europe, and protecting our interests, and claimed for the Government, if it enjoyed the general confidence of the country, that it should be allowed to exercise a certain amount of reserve.—(*At Bournemouth*, Dec. 4th.)

[1] *Lord Carnarvon* touched on the matter in a speech at a public dinner at Dulverton, saying it was no loss of power at certain times to remain quiet.—*T.* Nov. 26th.

The inevitable fall of Plevna has taken place after a defence of unparalleled gallantry (loud applause). . . . I have had no opportunity, since that great event was made known to me, of speaking with anybody, but I hope and trust the time has come when a peace may be made in this great and terrible war. . . . England is a double nation. She is a Western nation, and also, I may say, an Eastern nation. . . . I cannot imagine that such a thing as anything like a useful peace connected with Eastern affairs can be made without a proper and due intervention of England.—*Mr. Gathorne Hardy.*[1]

But no doubt the longer the war goes on the more difficult it will become to maintain that position, conditional neutrality, and certainly the more anxious does the country become. . . . I trust, as I have said, that peace may be maintained, and that it may be maintained within the conditions laid down by Lord Derby's despatch of May 6th. But, gentlemen, if from the cause to which I have referred, or any other cause, these conditions should not be respected; if, unfortunately, in spite of all the earnest efforts of Her Majesty's Government to keep this country out of war, it should be necessary for the vindication of imperial interests and national honour to unsheath the sword, then, gentlemen, I express, not only my individual feelings, but the feelings of a united people, when I say that, once unsheathed in such a cause, that sword must not be returned to its scabbard until it be entwined with the laurels of unquestioned victory and the lily of lasting peace.—*Lord John Manners at Grantham,* Dec. 12th.

The *Daily News* severely criticised Mr. Gathorne Hardy's reference to "intervention."—(Dec. 13th.)

The *Spectator* lays no stress on Mr. Hardy's use of the word "intervention," because from the context it thinks that he meant the use of moral influence; but it says both speeches will be read by all English politicians with anxiety, and by many with a displeasure which is only not dismay because it is well aware that Mr. Hardy and Lord John Manners do not constitute the whole Cabinet, but only a part of it. The speeches are full of pointed and exclusive praise of Turkish heroism and emphatic invective against Russia for declaring war; moreover, they are the language of somewhat combative menace.—(Dec. 13th.)

The Ministry was speaking with two voices. Reassurance breathed in the words of Lord Derby, Sir Stafford Northcote, and Lord Carnarvon. But yet again, Lord Beaconsfield's clarion tones seemed echoed by Mr. Gathorne Hardy and Lord John Manners.

What was the guiding impulse by which England's diplomacy would be ruled in the momentous crisis on which the country was about to enter, this was an enigma which no one could surely read.

[1] Addressing the Edinburgh Conservative Working Men's Association (Dec. 12th).

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ARMED NEUTRALITY.

§ 1. *The English Quasi-Mediation.*

a. The effort of English diplomacy.—With the fall of Plevna we enter upon a new phase. The lull of the conditional neutrality was over. Almost simultaneously with the announcement of the early meeting of Parliament,[1] the news was published that the Porte had addressed a circular note to the Powers asking for mediation; but it was noted that the Porte only offered substantially the terms which had been rejected as totally inadequate by the Powers assembled in Conference a year before.

> The *Daily Telegraph* spoke of the Turkish circular as the solemn application of a great and persecuted people for justice.—(*about* Dec. 19th.)
>
> Europe refused to accept these assurances at the time, as we think, unfairly; and we are not surprised that now, when Russia has opened the floodgates of war, the Great Powers should deem it impossible to go back to the position deliberately abandoned at the beginning of the year.—*P. M. G.* Dec. 18th.

However, a day or two before the close of the year, the statement was made "with rather unusual pomp,"[2] that the English Government had accepted the mission of approaching the Czar with a view to negotiations for peace. According to one account, this was done at the instance of the Sultan, according to another account the mission was self-sought. It was not till Parliament met, and the Blue Books were presented, that exactly what had happened was known.

[1] See next § p. 277.

[2] *Spec.* Jan. 5th, 1878.

The Turkish circular was dated December 12th, two days after the fall of Plevna.[1] The result, said Sir Stafford Northcote,

> was not encouraging, for the Powers seemed to think it would not be possible to do anything, and were not inclined to do anything.—*H. of C.* Jan. 17th, 1878.

On December 14th the Turkish ambassador communicated this circular to Lord Derby, and on the same day he thanked him

> for the assurance which [Lord Derby] had given his Excellency some days ago that whenever negotiations for peace were set on foot, Her Majesty's Government would do what lay in their power to obtain favourable conditions for Turkey.—*Derby to Layard*, Dec. 14th.[2]

It is evident that the Turkish Embassy in London was now doing its best to engage the English Government to interfere in the struggle on behalf of the Sultan.

> The Turkish ambassador called upon me this afternoon. . . . As his Excellency referred more than once to the possibility of English intervention, I thought it right to repeat the warning which I had frequently before given, namely, that no such intervention was to be expected.—*Derby to Layard*, Dec. 21st.[3]

In a day or two, Lord Derby writes, instructing the English ambassador

> to ask the Porte whether the Sultan is willing that Her Majesty's Government shall inquire of the Russian Government if the Emperor will entertain overtures for peace.—*Derby to Layard*, Dec. 24th.[4]
>
> On the same day the Porte, through its ambassador, asked for the mediation of our Government. Her Majesty's Government thought it utterly out of the question to attempt mediation, but informed the Porte that they were ready to make the inquiry suggested. The Porte did wish it, and requested us to make it.—*Sir Stafford Northcote, H. of C.* Jan. 17th.

On December 29th Lord Derby received Prince Gortschakoff's reply,

> that Russia desired nothing better than to arrive at peace; but that for this purpose the Porte must address itself to the Imperial commanders-in-chief in Europe and Asia, who will state the conditions upon which an armistice can be granted.[5]

The tenor of the Russian reply was communicated to the Porte forthwith.[6]

[1] *Turkey*, ii. 1878, No. 1.
[2] *Ibid.* No. 2.
[3] *Ibid.* No. 4.
[4] *Ibid.* No. 6.
[5] *Ibid.* No. 15.
[6] *Ibid.* No. 17.

The Turkish diplomatists were eager to make England the vehicle of their acceptance of what they were astute to treat as the proposal of an armistice by Russia, and pressed Lord Derby to ask the Russian Government to send orders to their commanders to abstain from further military operations, and to come to an understanding as to the basis of the armistice. Lord Derby pointed out that England had not accepted the position of a mediator,[1] and again warned them against indulging false hopes of English assistance. However, in a day or two, Lord Derby instructed his ambassador to suggest to the Porte that delegates should be sent to the Russian head-quarters.[2] Acting on the advice of England (as the Turkish diplomatists were careful to put it) communications were opened, with the result that the Russian generals in Roumelia repudiated all knowledge of an armistice, and continued their advance, while the reply of the Grand Duke Nicholas, which was delayed for some time, stated that the negotiations could only take place directly with himself, and that there could be no question of an armistice at that moment without bases of peace.[3] Thereupon Lord Derby addressed urgent and angry remonstrances to St. Petersburg.[4] This brings us to January 10th and 11th, 1878. Late on the night of the 11th, and apparently crossing his own message of the same day, Lord Derby received a reply from Prince Gortschakoff stating that the necessary instructions had been sent by messengers, being of too serious a nature to confide to the telegraph, about a week earlier, to the commanders-in-chief both in Europe and Asia.[5] About this time (the exact date does not appear) the Queen sent a telegraphic message to the Emperor of Russia as follows:—

> I have received a direct appeal from the Sultan which I cannot leave without an answer. Knowing that you are sincerely desirous of peace, I do not hesitate to communicate this fact to you, in the hope that you may accelerate the negotiation of an armistice which may lead to an honourable peace.

This telegram was read by Sir Stafford Northcote in the House of Commons in reply to questions.

Sir Stafford added:—

> The communication addressed by the Sultan to Her Majesty was a private and personal and direct communication, and simi-

[1] *Turkey*, ii. 1878, No. 21.
[2] *Ibid.* No. 24.
[3] *Ibid.* Nos. 29 and 32.
[4] *Ibid.* Nos. 30 and 34.
[5] *Ibid.* Nos. 35 and 36.

larly the communication of the Emperor of Russia in reply; but I think it will not be convenient or right that these matters should be brought before the House. But as Her Majesty's communication to the Emperor of Russia was given on the advice of her Ministers, and as there might be some misapprehension as to its character, I have received Her Majesty's permission to make that public.—*H. of C.* Jan. 23rd.

On January 13th Mr. Layard telegraphed that the Grand Duke Nicholas was prepared to communicate the bases of peace to a person sent to him furnished with full powers to accept them, and to conclude an armistice; and that it had accordingly been decided to send Server Pasha and Namik Pasha the next day to Kyzanlik to meet the Grand Duke.[1] The next day he telegraphed that a Russian officer had appeared at the Turkish posts in front of Osman Bazar with a flag of truce, and had announced the suspension of hostilities in Bulgaria.[2]

There were further delays, never very clearly explained. Each side strove to throw the responsibility upon the other. There was talk of a failure on the part of the Turkish envoys to find the Russian commander, of want of instructions, want of authority, and so forth. But it is more probable that the delay arose because the Turks were desirous to stave off as long as possible the surrender of their strong defensive positions, in the hope that something might occur to bring them the active assistance of England.[3]

Meanwhile, the delay had a marked effect in irritating Public Opinion in England, and aggravating hostility and distrust of Russia.

It was not until January 31st that the preliminaries of peace and the armistice were actually signed at the Russian head-quarters at Adrianople.[4]

b. Hopes of English Assistance revive at Constantinople.—The two main circumstances which caused the comparatively quiescent period which we have called the "Conditional Neutrality" to give place to the alarms and anxieties of the "Armed Neutrality," were, firstly, the probable necessity for a practical decision on the exact significance to be given to the terms in the so-called "Charter of our Neutrality" relating to Constantinople and the Straits, which might result in active resistance to pretensions

[1] *Turkey*, ii. 1878, No. 40. [2] *Ibid.* No. 41.

[3] See *post*, § 7, as to the terms of the armistice, and *post*, chap. xviii., § 5, for the suggestion that Server Pasha, when he despaired of English help, was ready rather than otherwise to preclude any possibility of resistance to Russia being prolonged.

[4] *Turkey*, vii. 1878, No. 6.

advanced by Russia; and secondly, the fact that the English Government began to emerge from the isolation into which they had retired when they proclaimed the conditions of their neutrality, and to assume once more the *rôle* of a leading member of the system of Europe.

These facts were perceived; but there was no certain knowledge of the direction the diplomatic activity of the Government was taking, or what were its aims, though there was a shrewd suspicion that these were benevolent to Turkey. Moreover, it was soon noted that hopes of English assistance were reviving at Constantinople.

> The *Times* says that at Constantinople some voices or other—official or semi-official or non-official, no matter which—are heard insisting that now at last England is about to be called upon to assert her influence in the East, that the Government is making preparations for interference by force, and, at all events, that English policy is sufficiently uncertain to render it prudent for the Porte to maintain its resistance to the utmost until it has seen what the next few weeks will bring forth.—(Dec. 26th.)

> The Turks still believe that England is prepared to go to war if she cannot obtain from Russia such terms as Turkey may accept. This belief is much encouraged by telegrams from England about military and naval preparations being there made, and about the growing English hostility to Russia. Some of these telegrams are, perhaps, deliberate fabrications or exaggerations; others are not absolutely in bad faith, but bear a philo-Turk character, partly to suit the market for which they are designed, partly because all telegrams of an anti-Turk spirit run the risk of being stopped or delayed. Their information is at variance with that of the latest English newspapers, and, if it be incorrect and only tends to raise false hopes in the Turks detrimental to peace, the gravest responsibility is incurred by those who send them. The Turks, however, have not allowed their expectations of peace or of English aid to interfere with their military preparations, which are being pushed forward with the greatest possible vigour, more men having been got to the front than recently seemed at all probable. Hence their general tone is now less despondent than since the fall of Plevna. —*Constantinople Correspondent T.* Dec. 31st.

> The majority among the Turks had I believe come to the conclusion that the situation was almost desperate, that they could not compete with Russia without help, and that no help was likely to be afforded them. . . . In the interest of their country the more thoughtful among the Turks might well ask that something should be done to bring about a settlement at once. Such is the view that I know to have been taken by some men of this class. Even in the Turkish newspapers writers have said as much. . . . Since the declaration of Lord Derby, given in reply to the deputation

headed by Lord Stratheden and Campbell the hope that England would intervene had greatly lessened—had, in fact, almost disappeared. The deputation and the reply were the wettest blanket which has yet been applied to Turkish hopes of assistance from England. The leader of the deputation is comparatively well known out here, and is known not to be likely to have an overwhelming influence on English or other politics. . . . I have hitherto spoken in the past tense and have done so intentionally, because what I have attempted to describe was, rather than is, the feeling among the Turks. Now, again, there has sprung up among them the hope of English interference. It is whispered about that the Turks have been told to hold out at any cost, to refuse any terms which Russia may offer, above all to refuse to make the concession which shall allow the ships of war belonging to Russia or to any other Power to pass the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles; for that then England will assuredly come to their help. I know nothing of the origin of this rumour, though it is confidently stated to have arisen from the representations made by Mr. Layard. I know enough of the place also to recognise that, the wish being father to the thought, it is quite possible that the statement is a pure invention so far as Mr. Layard's name is connected with it. But the statement and the belief in its truth is widespread, and is in every way simply and purely mischievous unless it is true. —*Constantinople Correspondent D. N.* Jan. 5th, 1878.

It will be seen that throughout these proceedings the Porte has clung to the belief that it would sooner or later be supported by English arms, and that its ambassador here has within these five weeks reproduced the same convictions in conversations with the Foreign Minister of England, notwithstanding the warnings he had repeatedly received that Turkey must expect no military assistance from this country. The reasons for this tenacity of Turkish belief are not disclosed in the correspondence now published, but they are worthy of investigation.—*D. N.* Jan. 18th.

The *Constantinople Correspondent* of the *Daily News* refers to the belief of the Turks that if they refuse terms of peace, England is bound to come to their aid, and to a rumour that Mr. Layard had expressed a similar opinion. He adds:—

About the existence of the rumour and its widespread character there can be no doubt whatever. But the belief in English aid is one which, as your readers will remember, I called attention to months before Mr. Layard came here. One of your contemporaries attributes it to Embassy gossip, and the statements of members of the English colony who are "more philo-Turk than the Turks." At first sight what the English colony in Constantinople thinks and says is not of much importance. But as the Turks gather English opinion from it, its opinion has a certain value.—*D. N.* Jan. 19th.[1]

[1] Compare Server Pasha's complaints against England, *post*, chap. xviii. § 5.

c. New opportunities of quarrel with Russia.—It was soon seen how readily the new attitude of the English Government afforded room for causes of quarrel outside the particular interests which had been specified as the conditions of English neutrality. Signs were not wanting which showed how easily popular passion in this country might be aroused by any suspicion that Russia was purposely delaying the negotiations with a view to a more complete military triumph, or perhaps to the exaction of harder terms.

In this resentment, several points can be distinguished. First there was the notion that the Russians wished the war to continue for the sake of conquest.

Then there was a suggestion that the conclusion of the armistice was wilfully delayed to gratify the appetite of the Russian army for military glory. The wickedness of the Czar in prolonging the slaughter and the suffering was much dwelt on.[1] Next there was the notion that England had some claim or right to be kept informed in reference to every step of the peace negotiations, and the unwillingness of Russia to treat, except directly with the Porte, was represented as an insult to this country.

Connected with this there was, to begin with, the apprehension that by Turkey's agreeing quickly with her adversary while she was in the way with him, the belligerents might, behind England's back, come to terms entirely destructive of "British Interests;" and, in another aspect, there was what seems to be an anticipation of the famous contention advanced by the English Government a little later,[2] a notion, namely, to the effect that any treaty which Russia and Turkey might conclude without England's express consent would somehow be invalid, and a breach of international law.

The fear that Russia was about to conclude a peace which would give her an ascendency that England could not tolerate, is closely connected with the fear excited at this time by the movements of the Russian troops. The relations between England and Russia had become so strained that the occupation by Russian troops of positions, which in the event of war with England would be strategically important, had become a very important factor in the problem.

Moreover the notion of Russian faithlessness was so much in

[1] See *ante*, p. 238.

[2] The contention that the treaty of San Stefano should be "submitted" to the Congress, *post*, chap. xviii. § 6.

the ascendant just now, that with respect to Constantinople it seemed to be taken for granted that military occupation would be tantamount to permanent conquest, preliminaries of peace notwithstanding.

The *Globe* speaks of the danger that the Porte will attempt to patch up a peace with Russia without taking into account the opinion of any other Power.—(Dec. 19th.)

The *Standard* thinks the real choice of England at this moment lies between stern resistance to the southward march of Russia, and the practical abandonment of India and of her rank as a Great Power.—(Dec. 20th.)

The *Morning Post* says the time is approaching when it will be impossible for England to remain neutral unless she is prepared to witness the dismemberment of Turkey by the three Empires, and to act as the complacent signatory of any arrangement they may make for the final settlement of the Eastern Question.—(Dec. 27th.)

England will do all in her power, by mediation and intervention, or by whatever name the process may be called, to induce Russia to listen to terms of accommodation. Should her endeavours be unsuccessful, it is tolerably safe to say that England's attitude in the future will hardly much longer be such as is compatible with the character of a mere intercessor.—(Dec. 31st.)

If the Czar, who has solemnly bound himself to desire no territorial gain, goes forward anew, strewing the invaded land with freshly-butchered victims, and visibly pressing forward to Adrianople, and thence towards Constantinople—the ostensible objects of his march—then our policy will be forced to take plainer shape, and affairs would be found entering on a new and very resolute phase. Such is the meaning of recent events. . . . Apart from unjustly putting on one side the proofs that the Bulgarian horrors were manufactured, that Bulgaria was a prosperous region, that Bulgarian Christianity is sadly spurious, that the Ottomans have shown themselves fully worthy of justice and patience, and that the dismemberment of Turkey must be forbidden, those who whimper at the thought of not killing more Turks surely accuse themselves of a most ghastly inhumanity after some two hundred thousand human beings have perished in this needless campaign. But baser, if not quite so brutal, are those who, when their country's welfare and honour are set at stake, do the traitor's evil work of . . . pandering to the ambitions of the aggressor by endeavours to mark out for him where he may safely march and at what point he had better abstain. If we know anything of the English public, they do not want our aid to comprehend and condemn such conduct as this. It may pass without spoken comment, but the brand is none the less stamped upon the sleek treason as it issues under its disguise of Liberal policy. . . . The silencing of such persons, and the adoption of a policy befitting the power, humanity, and firm traditions of the Empire, belong in the last resort to the country itself.—*D. T.* Dec. 20th.

The passage which has just been quoted appears to be nothing less than a suggestion to the partisans of the policy which the *Telegraph* was so eagerly advocating, that they should do their best to *suppress* the agitation which had again sprung up upon the other side. It is a hint which is not without significance, when viewed in the light of subsequent events.

> [In the gloomy year which closes to-day, the sincere patriot must have] often felt shame and despair in seeing what venomous enemies to the welfare and honour of England were to be found among her own children. [Two considerations relieve the dark prospect]—the daily-growing spirit of the British people, and the decided action of the British Government. It is no longer in the least degree doubtful that an overwhelming majority in the country demands the cessation of this infamous war, with peaceful opportunities for Turkey to carry out her reformation. [The action of Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet] has, to a great extent, lifted the heavy clouds which oppressed all honest minds, and opened a vista leading to the hope of peace by agreement or peace by compulsion. . . . By accepting the honourable request of the Sultan, England has entered a new path of credit and courage. A Great Power deciding to recommend peace cannot be answered with empty diplomatic phrases; it contracts duties towards the belligerent which has relied upon its influence and claims against the combatant which disregards its arguments.—*D. T.* Dec. 31st.

> The *Daily Telegraph* develops the theory that the position of Russia with regard to the peace negotiations is an insult to this country.—(Jan. 1st, 1878.)

> The fact that Russia does not accept the good offices of a neutral Power to help in the settlement of the dispute between her and Turkey would hardly seem to call for the outburst of indignation which it seems to have provoked in some quarters. . . . Reasonable Englishmen read yesterday with a curious feeling of blended wonder and contempt certain extraordinary effusions of simulated patriotism, and not by any means well-painted passion, by which it was hoped that the national sensitiveness might be worked up to burning point when the suggestion was made that England had been affronted.—*D. N.* Jan. 2nd.

> The *Daily Telegraph* repudiates the charge of wanting war, and takes credit to itself for standing aloof from parties, and for leading instead of following opinion.—(Jan. 3rd.)

> The Government has not yet spoken as to these negotiations, and probably will not now speak until Parliament has assembled; but its friends are speaking everywhere, and we confess we find it difficult to understand their speech. They say in one breath that the Government of Russia is very cunning and very treacherous, and in the next that it has in its reply intentionally insulted and humiliated Great Britain. . . . The effort to represent Russia's

demand that Turkey should submit before she negotiates as an insult to Great Britain is, in fact, nothing but an effort to rouse Englishmen by taunts to engage in war. . . . The notion that England has sustained a rebuff at the hands of Russia, or, as the *Telegraph* tries so hard to prove, an insult, is almost silly.—*Spec.* Jan. 5th.

The preliminaries to the proposed armistice occupy a great deal of time, and there have already been such hitches as must excite grave doubts in regard to the eventual success of the negotiations. . . . Is Russia really in earnest in the negotiations, or is she using them as a pretext in order the better to push forward to her goal? It is quite necessary—in the face of the news about the negotiations—to ask this question, and to press for an answer.—*Globe*, Jan. 11th.

The firmness of a very small minority in the Cabinet, backed as that minority has been by unmistakable manifestations of public opinion, has hitherto prevented Lord Beaconsfield and his supporters from precipitating the country first into angry controversy, and then into war, with Russia. . . . Do the recent successes of Russia afford any reason for a departure from that neutrality which has been solemnly promised and hitherto observed? A majority in the country and a minority in the Cabinet say, "No." A majority in the Cabinet, backed by powerful personal and social influences, is believed to be ready on the slightest encouragement to say, "Yes." It is inclined to interpret Russia's refusal to enter into negotiations with England as an affront, and to find in her diplomatic and military attitude pretext for a quarrel. If this enterprise is to be defeated, the country must continue to make known, in unmistakable language, its desire to maintain a strict neutrality, and must insist on being obeyed. Lord Beaconsfield is waiting only until the nation's attention is diverted and its purpose relaxed. His own will remain vigilant and steady. What there is most reason to fear is the attempt to raise a quarrel on some incident of the negotiations for an armistice, and upon the part which England has taken in promoting it. . . . If the remonstrances and complaints which are said in the Constantinople telegram, which we publish this morning, to have been made by Lord Derby have really been made by him, we are possibly in the first stages of an intrigue against the neutrality of England and the maintenance of the peace—an intrigue of which Lord Derby himself is probably rather the victim than the agent.—*D. N.* Jan. 12th.

It is to be hoped the Russians will not unnecessarily protract the negotiations by bandying them about between St. Petersburg and the field of battle. . . . The Russians, in short, ought to know their own minds, and to be able to say distinctly at what price they will forego further victories. Unless they thus state distinctly and promptly their immediate demands, they will lay themselves open to the suspicion of protracting negotiations for the mere purpose of gaining time for further military operations. —*T.* Jan. 12th.

> There remains only one thing more for the pretended friends of Turkey to effect in order to fill up the measure of their wrong-doing, and some of them seem inclined to attempt it. Turkey, wounded and stricken to the ground, is warned to be ready to choose a renewal of her hopeless contest with Russia or to sustain attacks to be made on her territory by this country.—*D. N.* Jan. 23rd.

d. Reopening of the Domestic Controversy.—The close of the period of the Conditional Neutrality marks the reopening of domestic controversies which had been suspended.

In the first place there was the immediate and pressing question whether the English Government would regard the action of Russia as infringing upon the definition of the interests which they had laid down, or, again, whether they would find causes of war in some of the new possibilities of quarrel which were developing themselves.

This was a question whose imminence seemed to vary from day to day with every strategic movement of the Russian troops. Would the English Government order some counter-movement which would be equivalent to a declaration of war?

Secondly, now that England was about once again to assert her claim to take part in the concert of Europe, there was the weighty question, what kind of settlement would the English negotiations advocate? Was the influence of England to be thrown for, or against, the policy of emancipating the provinces from the dominion of the Turks?

It seemed that the opportunity had returned once more, and that the question of the merits of the "violet" policy had again become a practical one. Accordingly we find that arguments similar to those which had led so large a body of Public Opinion to the adoption of "Emancipation" as its policy once more began to be urged upon the public mind.

§ 2. *The Third Agitation.*

a. Public Opinion takes alarm.—As soon as the news of the fall of Plevna reached England a Cabinet Council was summoned. Ministers met on Dec. 14th, and again on the 17th.

The significance of these proceedings was at once appreciated.

> The *Daily Telegraph* speaks of the resumed sittings of the Cabinet rendered necessary by the fall of Plevna and the capture of Osman Pasha's valiant army.—(Dec. 13th.)

Many years have passed since an English Cabinet was called together on an occasion so momentous.—*D. N.* Dec. 13th.

The morning papers of Dec. 19th announced the decision which had been arrived at to summon Parliament for Jan. 17th.

The Eastern Question Association, with the Duke of Westminister at their head, have issued a very sensible circular, calling upon the country to strengthen the hands of the Government at the present crisis, if it adheres to the policy of neutrality, by the declaration that we intend to maintain a strict neutrality in the war between Russia and Turkey, or to weaken the hands of the Government if it contemplates anything like a deviation from that policy, by a similar declaration. The circular, signed by the Duke of Westminster, Lord Shaftesbury, Mr. Mundella, and others, so far as it urges on the country the necessity of an explicit declaration of its purpose as to neutrality, is an exceedingly able one. But it rather lacks one thing,—an explicit declaration that, even for the defence of Constantinople as a Turkish city, or for the embargo on the free passage of the Dardanelles by Russia, the country ought explicitly to decline to go to war. Of course the Government will say that at present war is not contemplated,—but that if Constantinople, or the right of imprisoning the Russian Fleet in the Black Sea, were endangered, then it would be necessary to go to war, and that for such contingencies we should prepare at once. What is now chiefly wanted from the public is an explicit protest against going to war with Russia on either of these issues, since it is neither in itself desirable that Constantinople should remain in Ottoman hands, nor that Russia should be humiliated by having her fleet perpetually "interned" in the Black Sea.—*Spec.* Dec. 29th.

It cannot be too emphatically stated that the country is not in favour of war, and that any open attempt to force a war policy on it would lead to such division and distraction as England has not seen in our generation. We cannot help fearing that this is as evident to Lord Beaconsfield as it is to us, and that he therefore summons Parliament together in the middle of January rather to obtain indemnity for something actually done than to consult it as to a future policy.—*D. N.* Dec. 19th.

The authoritative announcement which we made yesterday, that Parliament is to meet earlier than usual, together with the sinister interpretation which some officious and irresponsible persons are putting on the Ministerial decision, are producing their natural effect. . . . We were not wrong yesterday in raising a warning voice. It is for war preparations that the meeting of Parliament is to be hastened.—*D. N.* Dec. 20th.[9]

There was ample reason in all the considerations which now become apparent, for the anxiety and alarm with which the state of affairs was regarded.

Catching the alarm from the excited tone of the "red" organs and the calling together of Parliament, all the symptoms of agitation instantly reappeared. From the middle of December till Parliament actually met in the middle of January, the newspapers contained numerous accounts of meetings called to protest against a policy calculated to involve England in a war with Russia, with not a few notices of gatherings for other purposes, where occasion had been found to refer to the all engrossing topic.[1]

b. Parliament Out of Session.—During this interval many of the usual "Parliament out of Session" meetings were held. But at this juncture the Eastern Question overshadowed every other topic, and from the tone of the speeches made and of the resolutions passed, many of the meetings between members and their constituents may be regarded as constituting a part of the Agitation.

> We are all agreed that no power on earth shall be permitted to interfere with the free navigation of the Suez Canal or in any way to block our communications with India, and if the Turks shall by and by, as I hope and believe, be driven across the Bosphorus, we have a right to be consulted regarding the new territorial arrangements to be made. These declarations have been explicitly made more than once by the sensible and peaceable portion of the Cabinet, and unhesitatingly agreed to by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg. But what good can be done by all this vain bluster about helping our ancient ally, restraining the ambition of Russia, and vindicating British interests, indulged in by noisy and apparently frantic Turcophiles, and secretly encouraged by Lord Beaconsfield, passes my comprehension. (Applause.) Go

[1] The *Daily News* (Dec. 21st) has two and a half columns of correspondence and extracts from the provincial press for the most part urging agitation against war. On the 28th the correspondence occupies nearly two columns. The *Daily News* also publishes the manifestoes of several bodies, *e.g.* that of the Peace Society (Dec. 27th), and of the Eastern Question Association (Dec. 28th).

On the last day of the year the *Times* and *Daily News* notice meetings at Aberdeen and Edinburgh, a meeting at the Cannon Street Hotel (convened by the Workmen's Peace Association), and an open air meeting on Clerkenwell Green on the Sunday afternoon (Dec. 30th). Here an amendment to the effect that, in the opinion of the meeting, England should actively interfere if Russia did not accept certain equitable terms with a view to establish peace, was moved, but rejected by a large majority.

The same afternoon Canon Liddon, in his sermon at St. Paul's, alluded to the war-cloud which seemed now to lower over our beloved country. He prayed that this calamity might be averted, and that this Christian land would not be drawn into a war for the championing or support of an ancient or corrupt system of cruelty which, condemned by Almighty God, was going to decay and destruction before our very eyes.

Accounts of meetings, &c., continue up to the eve of the meeting of Parliament. The *Daily News* almost every day publishes several columns under the heading "Public Opinion on the Eastern Question." The *Times* published at less length similar matter under the heading "Public Opinion on the War."

to war for an idea, and without allies! The thing is ridiculous.—*Mr. W. E. Baxter at Forfar*, Dec. 21st.

Lord Beaconsfield, instead of devoting his energies to build up out of the Christian populations of Turkey, a barrier to Russian ambition, has clung to the notion that Turkey could go on because she could fight. The result is that we have handed over the key of the situation to Russia, and if Russia gets to Constantinople she may thank Lord Beaconsfield for having got there. . . . A war begun for British interests would almost certainly end in a war for the maintenance of Turkey, and we should be fighting for a phantom, and something worse than a phantom, without an ally. He was not, and never had been, for peace at any price. But before England drew the sword let her be sure that she drew it in a great and righteous cause.—*Mr. Osborne Morgan at Wrexham*, Dec. 28th.

Russia never could occupy Constantinople, for all the Mediterranean Powers were much more largely interested in that occupation than we were. Yet Russia's entering Constantinople to enforce peace would be no breach of the conditions of Lord Derby's despatch. (Cheers.) Russia could never have the sole navigation of the Dardanelles. (Cheers.) It could not be allowed, and Russia had more sense than to ask it. (Cheers.) He appealed to the people of England not to waste the resources of the country by building up the rotten despotism of Turkey which by the doom of God was now coming to an end. (Loud cheers.)—*Mr. Mundella at Sheffield*, Jan. 7th.

We have a Prime Minister who does not conceal his admiration for the men who carry on [the Turkish] system of administration. We have a War Minister who apparently came all the way to Edinburgh to tell you what fine fellows he thought them. Our army is all for the Turks. Our navy is all for the Turks. Our country houses are all for the Turks. All loafers of every degree and rank, all that class of men who go about in clubs or drawing-rooms, or taverns, intent on forming what they are pleased to call public opinion, are one and all for the Turks. The London newspapers are for the most part writing on the same side with an alacrity which I have never seen applied to any previous controversy. Epithets of extraordinary bitterness, wholesale accusations of cant, hypocrisy, absence of patriotism, want of common manliness are applied to men whose only crime is that they wish their countrymen to wash their hands of all responsibility for Turkish misrule and Christian misery. . . . If Lord Beaconsfield, in the plenitude of his folly, and his colleagues, in a fatal spirit of compliance, which some of them, at any rate, have not hitherto publicly shown, should think fit to entangle us in a war with Russia, we shall contend with every faculty we possess against a course of policy which we regard as a signal folly and an unpardonable crime.—*Mr. Trevelyan at Selkirk*, Jan. 10th.

I once expressed—with very great irreverence for such an aged institution—a wish that the Foreign Office might some day be burned down, and, correcting myself, that if it should happen to be burned down, I hoped all its mad, and foolish, and wicked traditions should be burned with it. But those traditions still linger in the Foreign Office. . . . Some poet, I forget who, has said:—

"Religion, freedom, vengeance, what you will,
A word's enough to raise mankind to kill,
Some cunning phrase by faction caught and spread
That guilt may reign, and wolves and worms be fed."

Yes, "Some cunning phrase by faction caught and spread," like the cunning phrase of the "balance of power"—which has been as a "ghastly phantom" which the Government of this country has been pursuing for two centuries, and has never overtaken it—some cunning phrase like that we have heard of "British interests." Lord Derby said the wisest thing that has been uttered by any member of this Administration during the discussion on this war when he said that the greatest of British interests is peace—and a hundred, and lately far more than a hundred, public meetings have said the same. And in millions of households men and women have thought the same. To-night we shall say "Amen" to this wise declaration. (Loud applause.)—*Mr. Bright at Birmingham*, Jan. 12th.

This suspense is becoming altogether unendurable; and all the more so because we have reason to think that it is the work of one man—who, like the Minister of an olden time, seems resolved to ruin or to rule the State, to impose his will upon the nations. The policy of Lord Derby we know, the policy of Lord Carnarvon and of Mr. Cross we know and can appreciate. It is not a policy which we were led to expect from the Conservative Government, it is not a spirited foreign policy—it is not, in my opinion, a policy which is very wise or very noble. . . . That is the policy of the priest and the Levite who passed on the other side, but at least it does not make common cause with thieves. . . . None of us would think of doing anything to embarrass their sincere neutrality, but we have no such assurance. Behind Lord Derby and behind Lord Carnarvon stands the Prime Minister—and behind the Prime Minister there stands I know not what. . . . A short time ago we were sympathising with the French nation in their resistance to the insolent attempt to impose upon them a personal Government. It seems as though we were to be the victims of a similar experiment; but it yet remains to be seen whether the will of this people will be overruled, or whether our Prime Minister shall yet rather "submit or resign." . . . You will not be asked to go to war against Russia in the first instance, but we may be asked to vote supplies, to vote men and money, to send troops to Gallipoli, to engage in mediation, to concur in threatening messages to a high-spirited Power, in fact, to do something or other which will

be represented at the time as perfectly innocent and natural, but which will, nevertheless, draw us one step to a war which no right-thinking man dares to advocate at the present moment. The policy of the Prime Minister is to juggle into war.[1]—*Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham*, Jan. 12th.

The crisis is so grave, I feel so strongly that to plunge this country into war to prop up one of the worst Governments that ever afflicted mankind would be such an intolerable disgrace to this country, and would bring upon us misfortunes of such unparalleled magnitude, that I am anxious the question should be as far as possible raised above party considerations, and that every man and woman should feel that it involves issues infinitely more grave than a mere struggle between Liberals and Conservatives. . . . But if, on any pretext whatever, the Government should show an inclination to involve us in the struggle, if they should attempt step by step to lure the country on to a position from which she could not retreat, if they should ask for large votes of money for increased military armaments, it would be their bounden duty not to take any such step without an appeal to the nation. (Loud cheers.) This to my mind would sufficiently indicate the direction in which we were drifting. It would then, it seems to me, become the bounden duty of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons to resist to the very uttermost, and to put every obstacle in the way of the Government obtaining the money they asked for until the people of England at the polling booths had decided whether in the name of British interests or British prestige they were going to ally themselves with a desolating and a decaying despotism. No one has a right to assume that with regard to the Eastern Question the present House of Commons represents the opinion of the country. At the general election four years ago I believe the subject was scarcely alluded to. . . Another aspect of the Eastern Question seems to be fraught with imminent peril. If England escapes entanglement in Europe, there are indications that the Russophobists, baffled in their desire to entangle England in a war with Russia, will shift their machinations to our Indian frontier.—*Mr. Fawcett at Shoreditch*, Jan. 15th.[2]

Even at the moment, in the autumn of 1876, when the Russian cause had been popular in England, and when he had said that he abhorred the conduct of the Turks, he had felt bound to add that there lived no Englishman who had a worse opinion of the Government of Russia. He should agree with the Positivists in their

[1] Compare *Punch*, Jan. 19th.

The cartoon depicts Britannia, guided by Lord Beaconsfield, shrinking from the "dizzy brink" of the precipice of war, to which he has led her.

LORD B.—"Just a leetle nearer the edge?"

BRITANNIA.—"Not an inch further. I'm a good deal nearer than is pleasant already!"

[2] Compare letter from Lord Lawrence (*T.* Jan. 10th) deprecating a "forward" policy in Afghanistan.

address to Midhat Pasha, that if the choice were, as they thought it was, and as he, with dreams of a new Greece, did not think, between Russia at Constantinople and Turkey at Constantinople, he should, on the whole, prefer the latter. The Turkish was, in ordinary times, a less stifling despotism than the Russian. It was sad to see a small portion of the English public fluctuating between the extreme views in each direction—views equally full of error and danger. He did not share the views of those who thought the passage of the Dardanelles should be yielded as a matter of course. But to fight about it was another thing. He saw reports of English meetings which, in the name of "British interests," asked for war, and although the fire had smouldered for the last few days, he feared that it would break out again. He prayed for peace. For what were we to fight? Against an extension of Russian boundaries in Armenia, which would be slight, but which, if it were great, would be better met by a still greater extension of English territory in Egypt. Against the "passage of the Dardanelles," which meant in time of war its passage if Russia could; a passage which Russia would equally attempt if she could, but had not the right—against this we were to fight without allies. For Heaven's sake, let them not commit the folly of plunging into war at a moment when all Europe would be hostile to our arms—not one Power allied to the English cause.

[Replying to questions.] He should consider a demand by Russia that Turkey should give up her fleet to her as an aggressive act, especially directed against this country, and an act which he should be disposed to resist—but he should think it very improbable that such a demand would be made.—*Sir Charles Dilke at Kensington*, Jan. 15th.

The Government made a great mistake in declaring at the outset that they would use no force under any circumstances. At the same time the present war could not be justified. Turkey had not only promised reforms, but in the promulgation of a constitution had already shown considerable energy. He regretted to see a small party in this country actually encouraging Russia to press for the opening of the Dardanelles. He wished well to Turkey, and hoped she might enter on a course of peaceful development. Assuming Mr. Cross, Lord Derby, and Lord Carnarvon, had spoken for the Cabinet, it was our duty to support the Government in their endeavour to promote a speedy return to peace on a just basis. If Russia adhered to her pledges he had no fear we should be driven into war, but he did not think that peace-at-any-price resolutions were wise or dignified.—*Sir John Lubbock at Maidstone*, Jan. 16th.

The great majority of the speeches delivered by Members of Parliament during this interval were the speeches of Liberals. The Conservative members were for the most part silent, nor do

the few utterances which constituted the exceptions appear to be of much significance. Mr. Baillie Cochrane[1] was bellicose, declaring that it was the Conservatives who would maintain England's greatness, that treaties must not be violated, and the Russian advance must be resisted; while Sir C. Adderley[2] extolled the prudence of the Government during a difficult and anxious time, and Sir C. Legard[3] supported an honourable neutrality, but was ready to vote for armed opposition to Russia, should she attempt to seize Constantinople.[4]

The utterances of this interval are not confined to mere generalities against war, but in some cases deal more closely with the questions which were about to present themselves, arising out of the impending new settlement of South Eastern Europe.[5]

It appeared that the Liberals generally were not prepared to regard some acquisition of territory by Russia (although they deprecated and disapproved it), nor were they prepared to regard a military occupation of Constantinople as distinguished from its permanent acquisition, as a *casus belli*. With regard to its permanent acquisition, there were some, no doubt, who would have opposed the warlike attitude of the English Government even if this result had been in question; there were others who thought this a matter in which England was only concerned to a far less degree than Austria. But the bulk of the Liberal party believed that it was not in question at all, not only because Russia had disavowed any such intention, but also in view of the enemies with whom she

[1] At Ryde, *T.* Dec. 21st.

[2] At a dinner at Hanley, *T.* Jan. 10th.

[3] At Scarborough, *T.* Jan. 14th.

[4] The *Times* (Jan. 10th) publishes a letter from Mr. Forsyth, addressed to one of his constituents, in which he says he believes that in a war with Russia we should not have "a quarrel just"; and a letter which was read at a meeting at Bath, from Lord Bath, in which he speaks of the value of declarations in favour of neutrality from whatever political party they proceed.

[5] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's letter (*T.* Jan. 17th) and Mr. Gladstone's article, "The Peace to Come" (*19th Cent.* Feb. 1878), may be considered in connection with these utterances.

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe suggests that England's objection to the independence of Bulgaria (founded on the approximation of Russian influence to the central seat of Turkish authority) might be greatly softened, if not entirely removed, by assigning to Roumania that portion of Bulgaria which lies between the Danube and the Balkans, and giving to the remaining parts of Bulgaria a system of autonomy sufficient to secure them from the evils of Mussulman administration. Compare this suggestion with the division into Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia at the Congress of Berlin.

Mr. Gladstone, in the article in question, recognised that there were legitimate grounds for jealousy of Russia. He contended that the most effective check to Russia was to be found in the concert of Europe, and that the setting up of separate interests and claims was to be deprecated.

would have to contend should she be tempted by the apparent opportunity.

c. The Question of the Straits.—Among the impending questions, few at this time attracted more attention than that of the navigation of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.

Within the general movement to protest against a war with Russia, and to hold back the Government from committing the country to it, we now note a special movement to minimise the interest of England in preserving the existing rule of the Straits.

Towards the end of 1877, a small committee[2] was formed for the purpose of circulating, and inviting signatures to, a document called "An Appeal in favour of the Free Navigation of the Straits of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus." This document expressed the opinion that "neutralisation" of the Straits would be a benefit to the world at large, but the word "neutralisation" (it appears) was used to signify a removal of the restriction on the navigation of the Straits by ships of war. The document earnestly deprecated war in support of what it represented as an arbitrary curtailment of the natural rights of Russia, by a paper condition adapted to cause much annoyance to her in time of peace, but offering little impediment to her in time of war.

In support of these views a meeting, to which admission was by ticket, was held at Willis's Rooms on the afternoon of January 16th, under the chairmanship of the Hon. and Rev. W. H. Freemantle.

> There was clearly a division of opinion among those present. Cheers and counter-cheers were more than once called for and given. Amendments were proposed which can hardly have formed any part of the original programme. If the intention was to invite a free expression of the general opinion of London, the place chosen was too small, and the announced order of proceedings, however imperfectly kept, was too compromising. If, however, all that was desired was to give the friends of peace and the advocates of an open passage through the Dardanelles an opportunity of putting forward their views in the presence of those who agreed with them, our complaint must rather be that the meeting was not sufficiently select, and that there was much too pronounced a tendency to uproar among the company.—*T.* Jan. 17th.

[1] Among the contributions to the elucidation of the subject was a letter from Sir William Harcourt (*T.* Jan. 16th) on the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, in which he contended that those who spoke of that treaty as having closed the Dardanelles to the vessels of war of all nations except Turkey and Russia had fallen into error; and that the effect of the secret article was only to bind Turkey not to relax, in favour of the enemies of Russia, an existing rule. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 144.

[2] Mr. E. A. Freeman, the Rev. Canon Liddon, Dr. Humphry Sandwith, Mr. Auberon Herbert, with Mr. C. Maurice, as hon. sec.

It is pretty clear that no important section of public opinion in this country would have been willing to acquiesce in an arrangement which should open the Straits to the Russian war-flag and leave them closed to our own.

The movement for minimising the interest of England in the maintenance of the existing rule, or for representing it as a hardship on Russia, was not endorsed by the Liberal leaders, or by the Liberal party as a whole.

They were ready, it seemed, to support the Government in the contention that any alteration of the rule was a matter of European concern, and that if the Straits were open to the Russian war-flag they should be opened to war-ships of all nations. Moreover it was pointed out that probably Russia might not care to press for an alteration of the existing rule in this sense. Whether or not this conjecture was well founded, at all events the point was not actually raised. Thus attention became diverted to other and more pressing questions.

d. The Liberal Leaders come to the front.—As in the first Agitation, so now, the localities, and the special organisations which had been called into existence by the Eastern Question moved before the official leaders of the Liberal Party. As before, the movement came from below, and not from above. The country was anxiously waiting to see what line the Liberal leaders would take. The stepping of prominent Liberals into the arena was not the signal for the renewal of agitation, it was rather a response to an appeal.

> Nothing is altered in the essential circumstances of the case; but fresh urgency has been given to the debate which has from the first prevailed respecting the proper attitude of this country in the present war. . . With this anxiety pressing upon the public, there is one expectation which must be present to every thoughtful mind. It is that the nation may reasonably look for some guidance at such a moment from its recognised political leaders. . . We have a right, in short, to expect that the Opposition leaders will take some early opportunity of relieving the uncertainty of the country with respect to their view of our general relation to the course of events. It is perfectly well known what view will be taken and what course adopted by one large and resolute section of the Liberal Party. A considerable and determined body, both in Parliament and in the country, will resist to the last any attempt on any pretext to involve the country in this war. But what we want to know is whether the leaders of the party will support the same policy. Will the Liberal Party be substantially at one or not in this great crisis? There will be plenty of oppor-

tunities within the next fortnight for the Opposition leaders to give expression to their opinions. One or two important meetings have been accelerated in order that public opinion may find expression before Parliament meets, and in an emergency like the present occasions must be made if they are not forthcoming.—*T.* Jan. 2nd.

If there be any disposition anywhere to enter into this war—if insanity of such a kind anywhere prevails—it is to be found, beyond question, in the Conservative rather than in the Liberal ranks. . . It should be clearly understood that the most earnest and energetic section of the community is prepared to act decisively, without wavering, in support of the principle laid down by Lord Carnarvon.[1] Not merely have they no desire for a repetition of the policy of the Crimean War, but they would oppose such a repetition to the utmost of their power. They would exhaust every legitimate means of Constitutional resistance in opposition to the revival of that policy. . . It rests with the speakers during the next few days to declare themselves so plainly on this point as to disperse all doubt respecting it in the public mind. Any further reticence would be a culpable disregard of the interests of the country. . . Wars have been made before now by blustering factions in defiance of the real will of a nation. . . The leading Liberal statesmen would have it in their power, by plain and timely speaking, to dissipate this danger, even if they were opposed by a united War Party in the Conservatives. They may learn, however, from Lord Carnarvon's speech, that they will but be following the policy of the Ministry itself in exerting all their influence on the side of peace. Let it be understood once for all that the most responsible leaders in both parties deem the policy of the Crimean War so obsolete that it would be "insanity" to revive it, and there will be an end of the present unjustifiable scare.—*T.* Jan. 3rd.

The *Spectator* notes that Mr. Forster is to speak to-night at Bradford, and Sir William Harcourt is to speak next week at Oxford, and hopes that others of the Liberal leaders will make an occasion for declaring their views on a crisis which is probably by far the most important through which the country has passed for twenty years. It notes with regret that Lord Carnarvon's reply has induced some of the local leaders of the Liberal Party to postpone or discard an intended meeting. This is a great mistake. In the first place, there are two parties in the Cabinet, and nothing is more important than to strengthen the hands of the party favourable to neutrality. In the next place, Lord Carnarvon's speech does not touch many of the points on which it is now most important that the leaders of the Liberal party should tell the country gravely and unmistakably the policy they intend to support. It is high time to define more clearly the points so ambiguously touched on in Mr. Cross's speech of last year

[1] Referring to his speech on Jan. 2nd, *post*, sub-sec. *g*.

respecting the English interests which we will not allow Russia to injure. The country ought to insist on knowing precisely what men like Lord Hartington, or Mr. Forster, or Sir William Harcourt mean, and what they do not mean, on the subject of the Dardanelles and Constantinople. It desires to hear the leaders of the Liberal party declare, in so many words, that so far from being willing to go to war in order to keep the Dardanelles closed against the Russian navy, they would see the Straits opened to the Russian, as to every navy, with as little concern as the Straits of Gibraltar, and that they will resist with their whole might every attempt to drive us into war for the purpose of enforcing any longer this restriction on Russia. It desires also to hear from them precisely what they think right in relation to Constantinople.—(Jan. 5th.)

Every one knows that to-day we are in front of a grave and immediate crisis. Within a few days or weeks we may be at war. . . . That portion of the Press known as the Ministerial Press, and which occasionally writes with authority, day after day distinctly advocates the immediate commencement of a war. . . . I agree that Russia may make demands which we may have the right to resent. No one could say that she should be allowed to take possession of the Suez Canal. I fancy too that her permanent occupation of Constantinople would be objectionable to the majority of the people of this country. (Hear, hear.) The occupation of Constantinople would necessarily involve the exclusive possession of the Dardanelles. . . . (Cheers.) But why should we assume that she is going to make such demands? . . . If Russia asks for the opening under regulations of the Dardanelles to all nations, I would not deny it to her. It is true that England has a right to be heard on that question, but so equally with us have the other European Powers. . . . But I am not sure that there may not be Russian statesmen who will hold the opinion that Russia has far more to gain than lose by keeping the entrance to the Black Sea locked rather than re-open it.—*Sir Henry James at Taunton*, Jan. 4th.

What harm is likely to come to England if Russia succeeds as much as any one expects her to succeed? . . . Roumania may become independent. Why not? What harm to us? Bulgaria may become self-governing. I hope she may—(cheers)—and again, what harm to us? Bosnia and Herzegovina may become self-governing, or Austrian—I don't think it matters to the interest of England which. Montenegro may become secure and enlarged. I hope she may. . . . I consider there is no danger of Russia obtaining possession of Constantinople. . . . Not merely because England is opposed to it, but because Europe is opposed . . . it is not especially our business . . . to keep Russia out of Constantinople. It is quite as much European business, and it is still more Austrian business, and still more German business. . . . [Many would say we should go to war to keep the Bosphorus and

the Dardanelles shut against Russian ships of war.] I don't wish to see those ships of war in those Straits; I do not want particularly to see the Russian ships of war anywhere. . . . The question is not whether we should encourage Russia in claiming a right to send her ships of war through the Straits into the Mediterranean, but whether we alone, of all the Powers, should make it a reason for a *casus belli*, by insisting on that claim if she does so insist. . . . What we ought to look forward to, and what Russia will assent to, is, that if there is to be a fresh arrangement, it is to be made after negotiation in conference by the Powers interested. . . . Well, I do not believe that Government, when Parliament meets, will try to plunge us into this war. I feel sure that Parliament would resist their efforts if they tried to do so. But speaking for myself, and I think speaking for you, I say there are no efforts within the pale of the Constitution that I will not make to preserve my country from this calamity and this crime. (Loud and prolonged cheers.)—*Mr. Forster at Bradford*, Jan. 5th.

We are threatened every day with war—not, it is true, openly or avowedly by the responsible advisers of the Crown; all the official declarations of Ministers, and notably the latest, have been in the sense of peace; but there is at work a sinister influence, in the press and elsewhere, which is employed persistently to discredit those assurances, to spread distrust, to inflame prejudice, to kindle animosity, to excite irritation, and to manœuvre, if it cannot exasperate, the country into war. . . . As to the portion of Bessarabia which Russia is understood to claim, she may well be left to settle that matter with her Roumanian allies. . . . That Russia will insist on some securities for the protection of the Christians in Bulgaria is certain, and is to be desired. That was the professed object of the war, and she cannot be expected or asked to abandon it. The autonomy of Bulgaria will, no doubt, be demanded, and I hope it will be established under proper safeguards. . . . I am disposed to think that it will not be Russia who will insist most strongly on the demand that the passage of the Dardanelles shall be made free. If that condition is imposed at all, it will be made rather in the interest of the Western Powers, who are chiefly concerned in it. Lastly, let me speak of Constantinople. Now, I wish explicitly to state, that I desire as little as any one to see Constantinople in the hands of the Russians. I think that this is contrary to the interests, not only of England, but of Europe, and the Great Powers are notoriously of that opinion too. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that Russia is under the most binding obligations to Germany and Austria not to acquire Constantinople. . . . But beyond any assurances, we have a very material security for Russia's good faith in this matter. Russia dares not, if she would, violate her pledges to Austria, for an Austrian *corps d'armée* placed on her lines of communication would compel her to retreat to-morrow. . . . But there is a danger, not of a permanent, but of a temporary occupa-

tion of Constantinople by the Russian troops; and that danger the English Government may easily bring about, and they may as easily prevent it. If Turkey makes peace now, the Russian army will not approach Constantinople. If she is encouraged by hopes of assistance to persist in the war, the Russian army will advance to Adrianople. If it cannot get a peace at Adrianople, it will seek it under the walls of Constantinople. That is a right to which, by the laws of war, Russia is clearly entitled. . . . Of course it is always possible that Russia may propound terms of peace which England cannot tolerate; but when that occasion arises it will be time enough to decide what is to be done. But then it is said that Russia cannot be left to negotiate peace alone with Turkey. Why not? . . . It is the ordinary right of the victor to prescribe terms to the vanquished. You have no claim to interfere between them, unless you intervene as an ally; and why should you intervene if your interests are not concerned?—*Sir W. V. Harcourt at Oxford*, Jan. 9th.

No one can justly say that the Liberal leaders have not adequately responded to our appeal of last week to declare themselves distinctly as to the policy of resisting the onward march of Russia. . . . Mr. Forster, Sir William Harcourt, and Sir Henry James, all of them leading members of the last Government, have spoken out with singular force; while a host of influential members, Mr. Lefevre, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Trevelyan, Lord Arthur Russell, and a great variety of the rank and file of the Liberal party—have all spoken in the most emphatic manner on behalf of strict neutrality, and in deprecation of the prevalent fear and jealousy of Russia. Indeed, nothing has been to us more satisfactory than the astounding mass of proof furnished within a few days alike by the leaders and the ranks of voters that there is *no* such reaction in favour of Turkey as London society was for a few months pleased to imagine, and to persuade the superstitious to believe. What opinion in England was in the autumn of 1876, that it still is in the opening of 1878. If there were any vibration in it at all, it was only during the temporary check of Russia before Plevna and Kars, when the gallantry of the Turks roused the admiration, and may in part, perhaps, have deflected the judgment, of a nation rather prone to help those only who can help themselves. But whether there were any such vibration in the public opinion of England we begin to doubt. Nothing is easier than to imagine such ebbs of feeling, nothing more difficult than to verify them, except by the actual test of calling meetings in all parts of the kingdom, or, still better, by a general election, turning expressly on the issue with respect to which the condition of public opinion is to be made known. During many phases of a great question, English opinion really hibernates, listens, offers misleading remarks, and waits for the critical moment. But looking to the remarkable unanimity of English opinion in September, 1876, and in January, 1878, it may, we think, be fairly maintained that at no time even between those dates has

there really been a moment when England would have seen our neutrality broken and an alliance with Turkey concluded, without a prompt and probably successful effort to overturn the Administration, and without an outbreak of very sharp wrath against the promoters of the pro-Turkish policy. It is obvious that our Liberal leaders have grown with the occasion. Compare Mr. Forster's admirable speech at Bradford last Saturday with the hesitating and timid speech of October 7th, 1876. . . . Our Liberal leaders have effectually whittled away Mr. Cross's three points to one; and we venture to say that no British Government will now venture to embroil us with Russia, unless Russia is silly enough and mad enough, quite without relevancy or excuse, to threaten Egypt and endanger our command of the Suez Canal. This is a great step in Liberal policy, though it cannot be denied that it would have been a still greater step, if it had been formally taken a year and a half ago.—*Spec.* Jan. 12th, 1878.

The satisfaction with which the declarations of the Liberal leaders were received points to their representative character.

Thus, notwithstanding apparent vacillations, the moment the great mass of Public Opinion was again roused to proclaim itself by the apparent imminence of a crisis, it seemed that it still was as determined in opposition to a "red" policy as ever.

e. The Counter-Agitation.—But now unanimity was not apparent as it had been in September, 1876. The great body of "violet" opinion was opposed by a noisy and excited anti-Russian party. There existed to a certain extent a counter-agitation, and rival bands of demonstrators well-nigh came to blows in Trafalgar Square.

Although the announcement that Parliament is to meet for "the despatch of business" on the 17th of January has been so recently made, several working men's organisations in the metropolis are, as is usual in times of political excitement, preparing for public "demonstrations" upon the question of what course England should take in the present crisis. Upon this question there is evidently, from the constitution of the committees now being formed, a division of opinion. "A great National Anti-Russian demonstration" is announced to be held in Trafalgar Square, on Saturday, the 29th instant. . . . On the other hand, a strong representative working men's committee is being organised, with the object of promoting an anti-Turkish "demonstration" in Hyde Park, to be addressed by some members of Parliament among others.—*T.* Dec. 20th.

Anonymous bills circulated largely in London during the past week, and headed "Englishmen, arise, your country is in danger," called upon the working men of London to meet in Trafalgar Square on Saturday, at three o'clock, and protest against Muscovite

aggression. Counter bills, signed by Messrs. Campin, Osborne, Mottershead, Nieass, Galbraith, Broadhurst, and other well-known working men, the committee of the Peace Society, asked their fellow working men to attend a meeting at the same place and time "in your thousands, to protest against an unholy war to maintain the abominable tyranny of the unspeakable Turk." The Peace Society came on the ground first, headed by a brass band, and found a large number of roughs and some hundreds of idle people awaiting them. From the first it was quite clear that the proceedings as an expression of Public Opinion would be an utter farce. Mr. William Osborne had scarcely been elected chairman in dumb show than several determined rushes were made at him and his friends. A rough scramble followed. . . . In the meantime a "war" meeting had commenced on the other side of the square, in the old familiar spot between the lions. [The speakers were quite inaudible, but a crescent flag was waved vigorously over the head of the chairman, Mr. Maltman Barry.] . . . As an expression of opinion either one way or the other the meetings were worthless. Their conveners simply gave a number of roughs the opportunity for getting up a disturbance—and such the proceedings would certainly have become at one time but for the prompt interference of the police. [A procession was afterwards formed, headed by bands, which marched along Pall-Mall, stopping and cheering in front of the Crimean statue, the War Office, and Guards' Club, to the house of the Turkish ambassador, where Mr. Barry presented his Excellency with a copy of the resolutions passed.]—*D. N.* Dec. 31st.

A telegram fron Buda-Pesth, under Saturday's date, and in the following terms, was received by the Secretary of the National Society for the Resistance of Russian Aggression :—

"In the name of Turkish friends in Hungary we send sympathetic greetings to Trafalgar Square meeting. The sanctity of treaty rights must be secured. Where there is a will there is a way. Signed Simonyi, Eruve, Helfy, Ignac, members of Parliament.—*T.* Dec. 31st.

The *Daily Telegraph* once more[1] publishes samples of anonymous violent pro-Turkish correspondence, and insists that the protests against the war with Russia, for which it loudly calls, do not represent the national feeling.

"H. P." experiences "feelings of shame and indignation that there should be those among us bearing the proud name of Englishmen who could stoop to humble themselves before the Czar and his satellites—afraid to defend the cause of truth and justice." He calls upon Englishmen to "strengthen the hands of our Ministers in bidding this cruel war cease."

"C. F. D." asserts that "Russia and England are, and must be

[1] *Ante*, p. 256.

for many generations, antagonistic Powers. This being conceded, it follows that as one Power advances the other must recede." He also seeks to "arouse the Government from its apathy."

"Commercial Traveller" writes: "In all my travelling experience, in trains, hotels, and among tradesmen throughout the country, every individual I meet now manifests entire distrust and disgust in regard to Russia, and expresses the fervent hope that our Government will not allow her, under the cloak of affected humanity, to seize lands fairer than her own. . . . I hope our Government will make a firm stand, and fearlessly prevent her from appropriating territory or fleet belonging to Turkey. It is perfectly shameful that the war should be allowed to continue."

[F. A. accuses Russia] of "blasphemy, perfidy, and hypocrisy." "Millions of Englishmen," he says, "wait in hope of witnessing the manifestation of chivalric patriotism on the part of those who are intrusted with the honour of the Empire."

[An Englishman writes:] "It is to be hoped that we shall not waste more time and words. Prompt assistance given to Turkey will save her gallant and dauntless army, while there is any of it left to succour. In snatching her from the bear's mouth we secure the integrity of the British Empire. The inevitable step must be taken, and when it is we shall have the happy consciousness of defending the cause of right and justice and honour, against deceit, cruelty, and infamy."—*D. T.* Dec. 28th.

The two Houses will meet at a moment when the invaders are in full march towards Constantinople, and when their ardent friends in this country have renewed their systematic efforts to obtain, by various devices, an expression of popular support in aid of policies adverse to the interests of the Empire. No means have been left untried which seemed calculated to produce an impression that England is heartily prepared to play a subservient part. The meeting held yesterday at Willis's Rooms, for example, to promote the free navigation of the Straits for ships of war, was a packed assembly. . . . Last night, also, another gathering of a similarly exclusive character, assembled in Exeter Hall, with like results, and a considerable number of excluded people voted a resolution in support of the Government, and carried it to Lord Beaconsfield's residence. In Birmingham, the persons who form the council of the Chamber of Commerce having used their position for party and Russian purposes, a large number of members at once signed a public protest against the usurpation of authority thus committed. It is the same throughout the country. The meetings at Manchester and Salford, in the Kensington Vestry Hall, the Town Hall, Shoreditch, at Plymouth, Bristol, Oxford, Maidstone, and Edinburgh, revealed the existence of genuine English feelings, and showed that the adherents of the Czar do not constitute at any rate, the entire nation. The revived agitation, indeed, is tame and spiritless compared with the outburst of 1876. The gospel of coercion has almost entirely disappeared; a demand for neutrality alone has taken its place,

and only the most devoted servants of the Czar call frantically for the destruction of Turkey. Yet the objects of these gatherings are still the same. They are designed to serve a party, and not national purposes; to satisfy religious rancour, and, if possible, prevent the Government from fulfilling the high duties they undertook when they became trustees for the British Empire. It will be seen that, even in the centres of advanced Radicalism, there are plenty of men who have refused to be made the tools of a foreign Power.—*D. T.* Jan. 17th.

f. Significance of the Agitation.—The agitation which broke out on the intimation that the Government was again stirring after the long isolation of the "Conditional Neutrality," was in the main an agitation to hold back from declaring war against Russia the Ministry which had possession of the armed force and of the resources of England. It was the effort of the great mass of "violet" opinion to resist the inclination to engage England in war; a war at the best unnecessary, or to be waged for inadequate objects; and a war which only too probably would turn out, in effect, to be waged for an object which was held to be positively deleterious to the true interests of England and the world—resistance to the Emancipation which, it seemed, had been achieved for Bulgaria.

The great body of "violet" opinion was now once more reinforced by the Isolation or Peace party; on the other hand, it was weakened by the wavering of some who thought that danger to Constantinople eclipsed every other consideration. But when the balance was struck, the preponderating opinion was heavily opposed to war with Russia on any such grounds as were apparent.

As the time draws near at which Parliament is to assemble, the utterance of the opinion of the country on the question of peace or war is as distinct and forcible as it has ever been. We receive from all sides reports of public meetings held in view of the momentous issue on which the representatives of the nation may very shortly be asked to pronounce. The result almost everywhere is the same. The nation is declaring itself for peace, and it expects with confidence that its representatives will give effect to its unmistakable wishes. If we could trust outward signs the difficulty would be to discover from what quarter any opposition to the national will is to be looked for. The language of Liberals and of Conservatives is in agreement on the main point.—*T.* Jan. 16th.

On the day Parliament met, the *Times* sums up the matter as follows:—

Though the numerous public meetings lately held in favour of peace have not always shown themselves as moderate as they might

have been, we can make no question as to their general usefulness, and as to the important effect they have produced. They have made clear the meaning of the country, and have given to the champions of peace a strength which could hardly have been obtained without them. The meetings which we report this morning are, we may presume, the last of the kind of which we shall now hear.—*T.* Jan. 17th.

g. The misleading light (Lord Carnarvon's speech).—On January 2nd, 1878, in the midst of this time of great anxiety, some members of a deputation which waited on Lord Carnarvon on a point of Colonial policy, expressed a wish that he should say a word upon the subject which was filling all men's minds. The speech which he made in answer to this request constitutes an important landmark.

Materially I do not think there is any great alteration since the time when Lord Derby gave an answer at the Foreign Office in the last days of November to a deputation that waited upon him, which answer, I think, was generally received with satisfaction as being reassuring. Although Plevna has since fallen, as every well-informed person must have expected it would fall before long, I do not see that there has been any material change in the situation, and therefore our attitude remains much the same—watchful of all real British interests, friendly as regards other nations, neutral as regards the belligerents. Though we are not prepared to bolster up Turkish interests as such, on the other hand, we are resolved now, as we have been from the very beginning, to have a voice in the settlement of this question whenever it comes on for settlement. . . . We have not, as has been supposed, offered to mediate, still less to intervene in the ordinary sense of intervention, but we have conveyed overtures of peace from one belligerent to the other. I have heard from some of my friends that they look with great dissatisfaction on the answer which the communication of these overtures has produced. Well, whatever may be the view taken by persons of different opinions as to the fruit which they have borne, I wholly dissent from the idea that there is any affront or insult conveyed to England by it. It seems to me unreasonable and without foundation to suppose such a thing. . . . . I think there is at this moment a serious risk on each side. On the one hand, I hope that we shall not in this country lash ourselves up into a nervous apprehension of so-called British honour and British interests. . . . On the other hand, I hope sincerely that the Russian Government and people will remember that many of the questions arising at this moment are questions not for the settlement of the two belligerents alone. They involve European interests; they are European questions; and we, as a member of the European family, have not only a right to be heard upon them, but it is very important that we should have a distinct voice in the

final decision of them. I do not feel myself any difficulty in reconciling these two views, provided only there is reasonable management and moderation on each side. Most of us in this room are old enough to remember the outbreak of the Crimean War. . . . I apprehend that there are very few people now who look back upon that war with satisfaction, and I am confident that there is nobody insane enough in this country to desire a repetition of it.—*Lord Carnarvon*, Jan. 2nd.

This was a statement of a most calming and re-assuring character. It pointed to a policy, not indeed actively "violet" (indeed the emancipation of the Provincials, it seemed, had been accomplished without our help), but to a policy free from the virus of philo-Turkism, while careful to maintain the rights of England in regard to any European re-arrangement.

This courageous speech instantly sent up the Funds 3-16 per cent., and produced the deepest sense of relief throughout the country.—*Spec.* Jan. 5th.

Lord Carnarvon has rendered the country a real and considerable service by the very explicit statement on the Eastern Question which he addressed to a deputation which waited on him yesterday at the Colonial Office. . . . In pursuing a policy governed by such views and animated by such a spirit, Ministers may if they choose command the support of a united country. Thus, then, by the action of a Minister of the highest official rank, the hopes of those cosmopolitan traders in English sentiment who have striven to falsify the action, as well of the Queen's Government as of that of the Czar, have been once more disappointed.—*D. N.* Jan. 3rd.

Once more, in the midst of disquieting rumours, we have the satisfaction to report a re-assuring statement made by one of the Ministers; and at the present moment it ought to be regarded as finally deciding the position assumed by this country. . . . It is at the height of this excitement, which, though factitious, is none the less dangerous, that Lord Carnarvon has chosen to speak; and he must have done so with a full sense of the decisive import which would be attached to his words. . . . We may interpret his words, therefore, as meaning at least as much as they say, and as an unmistakable expression of the present view of the Ministry. What, then, is the upshot of his speech? It is an emphatic—a peculiarly emphatic—reiteration of the neutral policy which Ministers on all responsible occasions have again and again asserted. Lord Carnarvon expressly goes back to the last utterance of Lord Derby, and declares that if that utterance was re-assuring a month ago, it is equally re-assuring now.—*T.* Jan. 3rd.

This speech many accepted as the expression of the policy of the united Cabinet. And by all the maxims applicable to Cabinet

Government they had a right so to regard it. But in so accepting it, men were relying, as afterwards appeared, on a misleading light.

> Nothing could be more satisfactory to the country than the re-assuring statements of Lord Carnarvon on the Eastern Question. I do not hesitate to say that the Government has only been kept straight by the influence of public opinion.—*Mr. Shaw Lefevre at Reading*, Jan. 9th.

> Lord Carnarvon spoke within a few hours after leaving a Cabinet Council, and the day on which that speech was made he was present at another Cabinet Council. This being the case, nothing can be more certain than that if Lord Carnarvon had, through some unintentional but inexplicable misapprehension, told the country that the policy of the Government was one of neutrality when at the very time they were contemplating war, he and his colleagues would have felt that they were bound as men of honour at once to correct the mistake that had been made, and to prevent the country being misled by a misstatement of so grave a character. But there is not a tittle of evidence to warrant such a supposition. —*Mr. Fawcett at Shoreditch*, Jan. 15th.

But if many took the view expressed by Mr. Fawcett, many others, however anxious they might be to pin the Government to the sentiments expressed by Lord Carnarvon, were secretly conscious that in affecting to attribute these sentiments to Lord Beaconsfield they were straining the constitutional fiction to a greater extent, perhaps, than it would bear.

> Lord Carnarvon's speech has produced in some respects the tranquillising effect which must have been intended by it. But, as we have more than once had occasion to observe, it has been the misfortune of the present Ministry that throughout the critical period of the last year and a half two diverse interpretations have been placed alike upon their utterances and upon their acts. [One day Lord Beaconsfield makes a speech at the Guildhall, and before the month is out Lord Derby makes a re-assuring speech at the Foreign Office. The next month the star of the East is again in the ascendant] and any surprise is supposed possible. This state of alarm is allowed to prevail for two or three weeks. It assumes a gravity sufficient to depress the value of the funds, and to check commercial enterprise throughout the country. The public are becoming so disturbed that they can hardly wait a brief fortnight for the opening of Parliament. Town Councils and Chambers of Commerce pass resolutions, meetings are announced everywhere, when, on a sudden, the other voice of the Ministry is heard, expressing amazement how in the world any credence could have been given to the former voice. A greater injury to the country, a more unreasonable provocation to all well-disposed people, it is impossible to imagine. We apprehend that the only

> security for the future lies in a decided and unmistakable manifestation of public opinion, and this, we hope, will now be given. . . . . There ought to be an end from henceforward to the mystery and ambiguity which have of late shaken every interest in the country. Very severe injury has already been inflicted upon our commercial interests by this agitation, and the whole fabric of business is disturbed. Even supporters of the Ministry like Mr. Ripley at Bradford, have to acquiesce in the "earnest prayer" of the Chamber of Commerce in that town "that Her Majesty's Government will preserve the country from any course of policy which, by leading to intervention on behalf of either of the belligerents, would tend to increase the commercial depression which now exists." Is it not intolerable that, while such is the unmistakable feeling of the country, and while the Ministry are thus solemnly pledged to neutrality, it should be possible for any faction or any partisans, whether here or in Constantinople, to foster the expectation that we shall, after all, lend support to the Turks? The time has more than come when the Government should cease, whether at home or abroad, to have two voices.—*T.* Jan. 4th.

Still, even those who were inclined to be sceptical were reassured by the belief that so long as Lord Carnarvon remained in the Government, there was a "watch-dog" [1] in the Cabinet, who might be trusted to sound a note of warning, if the danger of a development of an active "red" policy should become imminent.

The policy of Lord Carnarvon's speech was not the policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet. Yet the Premier allowed this deliberate exposition given in response to a most anxious demand at a critical moment to remain uncontradicted in the face of the world. He did not insist on Lord Carnarvon's resignation, but he administered a private rebuke which drew from Lord Carnarvon a reply re-affirming his position in the most unequivocal way. Still the Premier continued to accept him as a colleague and refrained from any public disavowal.[2]

Meanwhile, the anxiety revived which had been calmed for a moment by Lord Carnarvon's speech. There were many causes which contributed to this. The Cabinet met frequently—rumours of movements of the fleet and of an occupation of strategic points and of dissensions in the Cabinet were rife; the "red" organs protested against the inferences which had been drawn from Lord

[1] See Mr. Mundella's speech at Exeter Hall. "As long as Lord Carnarvon was in the Cabinet we had one watch-dog there who had pledged his honour to guard us against war."—*T.* Jan. 17th. Compare the comparison of Lord Derby, at a later juncture after Lord Carnarvon's resignation, to the point of rock, which, so long as it was not submerged, showed that the rising tide was not yet fatally dangerous, *post*, chap. xviii. § 7.

[2] *Post*, p. 308. Compare *ante*, vol. i. p. 378, and vol. ii. p. 156.

Carnarvon's speech. An attack of illness which withdrew Lord Derby from duty at this crisis added to the uneasiness.

> Some attempt we observe is being made at present to weaken the public effect of Lord Carnarvon's speech, and to describe it rather as an individual expression of opinion than as a responsible utterance representing authoritative views. . . . It is this unknown quantity, the course to be taken by the Prime Minister, that makes Ministerial statements of less weight in public estimation than they would otherwise have. We may know what Clive's council of war have resolved to do, but we do not know what Clive himself may be resolving after the council has broken up. . . . It is necessary, therefore, for the public not to allow Lord Carnarvon's clear, timely, and re-assuring speech to lead them into the belief that everything is settled, that the way is now plain, and that anxiety may henceforth go to rest.—*D. N.* Jan. 4th.

> The Cabinet Councils of the last two days have been occupied with the consideration of the answer to be returned to Prince Gortschakoff's reply to the communication made to the Russian Government by Lord Augustus Loftus last week. The very fact that such consideration should have been thought necessary shows the danger in which we live. What have we to do with the Russian reply, further than to pass it on to Turkey, to whom, and not to us, it belongs? . . . . That this is all that the Cabinet, as a whole, consented to do, we have Lord Carnarvon's word. But now is brought forward a new question altogether. Could not we, instead of transmitting the Russian reply to the Porte, sit in judgment on it, pronouncing it incomplete or unsatisfactory? Certainly we can do so; but that would be to change our attitude to the two belligerents. It would be to undertake a mediation without mediation having been invited or accepted; an irrevocable step in the downward path which leads to the abandonment of neutrality, and has no end but in war. Nobody can mistake, and nobody who cares about the matter does mistake, the significance of what is now going on. . . . Looking at all that has happened under the eye of the public during the last forty-eight hours, a disruption of the Cabinet would not be at all surprising. It must be perfectly clear to all that the question in debate is peace or war. An enforced mediation is intervention, and intervention is war.—*D. N.* Jan. 5th.

> Ever since Lord Carnarvon spoke, however, efforts have been made to whittle away the meaning of his words. He is declared to have spoken for himself alone, to have been most imprudent, and to have pursued a separate policy; while the *Telegraph*, in an article of would-be statcliness and moderation, ventures to intimate that he was at once sent for to Osborne to be rebuked by the Queen. All these stories, and especially the last, are probably the result of the furious disappointment with which the pro-Turkish party, and especially the *Telegraph*, which has been positively raving, regard the abandonment of the idea of war; but it

is evidently high time that Parliament should meet. The Premier is absolutely untrustworthy on this question; friendly counsel rapidly degenerates into intervention; and the country must tell him in plain terms that it will not go to war to protect an evil despotism, even though he describes that war as a war for British interests. Some of this fog wants clearing away, or with such a pilot the ships will be afoul of one another while the passengers are asleep. We never remember a more dangerous crisis, or one in which the advocates of wrong were more energetic, or less under the influence of reason.—*Spec.* Jan. 5th.

There was a Cabinet Council yesterday, and there is to be another to-morrow. So far as can be known the result up to this time has been satisfactory to those who desire that England should be kept out of an unjustifiable war. Lord Carnarvon has not resigned, and we may presume has no present intention of resigning. . . . No one pretends to doubt that the Cabinet is divided in its sympathies and its tendencies into what we may call a war party and a peace party. For the present, at least, it is clear that the advantage is with the latter. It cannot but have an encouraging effect all over the country to find that Lord Carnarvon's speech remains the latest Ministerial utterance on the Eastern Question; and though repeatedly challenged and repudiated by unauthoritative critics has remained without a word of contradiction or qualification from any official lips. This is, we readily admit, only the present aspect of the business. To-morrow or the day after may see a change.—*D. N.* Jan. 8th.

The serious illness of Lord Derby, in addition to the natural regret which it would rouse at any moment, is just now a grave calamity. . . . The withdrawal of the Foreign Minister from the deliberations of the Cabinet, and from the active conduct of the business of his department, gives a vast accession of influence to the Prime Minister, who has always considered himself not less the Foreign Minister than Lord Derby himself. . . . Lord Beaconsfield, despite of what to any other man would be conclusive manifestations of national opinion, is said to believe, on the evidence of Conservative election agents, that the feeling of the country is with him, and on the strength of this illusion he may, of his own motion, precipitate England into the most questionable enterprises. —*D. N.* Jan. 16th.

But though distrust of the intentions of the Ministry still prevailed, the demonstration which had been made by the great bulk of opinion in the country, and the response of the Liberal leaders, seemed to give promise of a successful resistance to warlike machinations, if such were indeed being framed. Moreover, the meeting of Parliament was anticipated, if as a time when men would be called on to strain every nerve to resist the action of the "red" party, yet with hope, and some degree of confidence.

§ 3. *The Week of False Confidence.*

Parliament met on January 17th. The strong misgivings which had been aroused by the announcement that the Session was to open before the usual time were suddenly allayed by the attitude of Ministers when Parliament actually met. To five weeks of "misgiving" succeeded a week of "false confidence," and after that the characteristics of the Armed Neutrality were fully developed.

The Queen's Speech expressed an earnest hope that the communications which had opened between the belligerents through her good offices, would result in peace; and acknowledged that hitherto the conditions of English neutrality had not been infringed. Then came the critical passage:—

> But I cannot conceal from myself that, should hostilities be unfortunately prolonged, some unexpected occurrence may render it incumbent on me to adopt measures of precaution. Such measures could not be effectually taken without adequate preparation, and I trust to the liberality of my Parliament to supply the means which may be required for that purpose.—*Queen's Speech*, Jan. 17th.

The impression made by this passage was that it was the intention of the Government to ask for an immediate grant, and this impression prevailed until Sir Stafford Northcote towards the close of the evening spoke in a strain which did much to restore Public Opinion to the comparative calm and confidence of the period of the Conditional Neutrality.

The Government had no immediate proposals to make, he said; England had deliberately taken up her position of conditional neutrality, and she would not depart from it.

For a week—the "week of false confidence"—agitation subsided, and at the same time men's attention began to turn to the larger questions of future policy.

In the Lords, at the opening of the Session, the Duke of Argyll made a speech which is remarkable as the reassertion of the "violet" policy as one which the course of events had again made a practical alternative, for the adoption of which the opportunity had returned.

> *Earl Granville*, after the address had been moved and seconded, criticised the Government policy.

Lord Beaconsfield replied. He denied that the policy of the Government had been hesitating or vacillating. The policy of neutrality had been deliberately adopted. He repudiated the suggestion that he had ever spoken in another sense.

I did not expect to hear again to-night of this Andrassy Note or the Berlin Memorandum. (Cheers.) I thought that all that had terminated, as I think it ought to have done, with the last session of Parliament. However erroneous may be the policy of the Government—and it may be erroneous—though you may, if you like, call it infirm, at any rate you cannot say that it has been a vacillating policy. . . . I think I am free from the imputation of, during the last six months, appealing to my countrymen, and I think the greatest charm of life is not to make speeches or write letters. . . . If you approve of our policy of neutrality, which shall be conditional upon the maintenance of British interests, you will at least give us the means by which that guardianship may be effective. . . I never wish to hear any mention of the Berlin Memorandum again.

The *Duke of Argyll* wished to say a few words on the definition of British interests laid down by the Government. The Queen's Speech and the despatch of May 6th must be read together. That despatch had never been canvassed in that House. . . There were four or five things in this definition of British interests in which, he thought, they might all cordially concur. In the first place there was in this despatch no mention of the "integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire." That phrase was "conspicuous by its absence." He rejoiced in that fact.

Then as to the reference to the Straits. If it were meant as a general declaration that the question of the navigation of the Straits is an open question, and ought to remain an open question, he heartily concurred; but if it meant that the present rules which had been established with regard to ships of war were those that ought not to be altered, and that serious objections existed to their alteration, he did not concur in that proposition. . . . Russia had practically declared that the Dardanelles question was an open question, and he did not see that more was required.

Then as to the reference to Constantinople. Did it mean that however Turkey might resist the arms of Russia, Russia was to be precluded as a military measure and as a temporary measure from taking possession of Constantinople, or did it merely mean that the ultimate possession of Constantinople was an open question? If it meant the last, he heartily concurred in it; but if it meant the former, he could only say that the gravest questions would arise with regard to the policy of the Government.

What was to be done in the future? He implored her Majesty's Government to recognise facts and to act upon them. Let them not deceive themselves; let them not talk nonsense about national independence. Turkey, regarded as an independent Power, was gone, never to recover. Let the Government recognise that fact

and act upon it. It was dead because it desired to die. (Cheers.) He was not ashamed of holding what were called humanitarian sentiments. He thought that the interests of millions of people in the East of Europe was a British interest, and an interest which they had a right to defend, and which having taken part in the Crimean War we were bound to defend. At present he saw no promise held out with regard to Epirus or Thessaly, but he confidently hoped that the Emperor of Russia would agree to no terms of peace which would not secure to all the subject populations of Turkey a sufficient degree of autonomy and self-government to secure them against tyranny.

The *Marquis of Salisbury* repudiated any suggestion of dissensions in the Cabinet, tracing the rumour to "our old friends the newspapers." The Duke of Argyll had told him that there were certain Ministerial papers which, whenever he opened his mouth, set about abusing him. He did not know whether the *Morning Post* had abused him or not; he dare say it had, but he cared nothing for that. He could not help thinking that the introduction of such topics into the House lowered the dignity of debate. . . . He expressed the opinion that during the Conference the Emperor Alexander was animated by a sincere desire for peace, and that he accepted conditions which no other Emperor in his position would listen to. The Czar had evinced an "almost tormenting desire for peace."—*H. of L.* Jan. 17th.

The *Marquis of Hartington*:—Ever since December 19th, the one question that has occupied the public mind—whether expressed in private conversation, in the press, or in public meetings—has been "What is the nature of the communication to be made to Parliament on its re-assembling?" When I refer to public meetings, I cannot help calling the attention of the House to the almost complete unanimity, and at the same time to the moderation, of the language used at them. It will not be asserted, I think, on either side of the House that these meetings have been of a party character—at all events, of an exclusively party character. Gentlemen belonging to both sides have summoned and attended those meetings. From many Conservative quarters expressions have been heard not less strongly in favour of the maintenance of neutrality than those that have come from any gentleman who sits on this side of the House. . . . We might have had a share in these negotiations. (Hear, hear.) We might have had a share in them as allies of the Turks, as allies of the Russians, or as friendly neutrals as the Germans have been. The Government has deliberately decided that it would stand in none of these positions. (Opposition cheers.) An overwhelming public opinion refused that we should become the allies of the Turk. The Government in accordance with a large public opinion also declined to become the allies of Russia. (Ministerial cheers.) And as the Government were compelled at the outbreak of the war to express to Russia their sense of the misconduct of which she had been guilty it was not likely we could stand in a position of neutrality friendly

to Russia that has been assumed by Germany and other Powers. . . . I gather that the intention is to ask for an immediate grant. Sir, it appears to me that there are grave objections to this course.

Sir Stafford Northcote:—According to information which only reached me about half an hour or an hour before I came down to the House, the two Turkish envoys who were deputed for the purpose of treating with the Russian commanders are still on their way, and it does not seem probable, from circumstances that are mentioned, that they will succeed in reaching the head-quarters for another day or two. . . . We do not at the present moment know what the Russian demands may be, and, of course, until we know that we have no proposals to make. . . . If the proposals that are made by the Russian commanders are of a character which will be satisfactory both to the Porte and to the other Powers of Europe, *cadit quæstio*; nothing can be more satisfactory. But it must be borne in mind that any arrangement, or any peace that may be made, can only be made with the consent and assent of the other European Powers, if the peace is one that in any way varies or affects the arrangements made between those Powers. (Cheers.) In answer to the question of the noble lord, I may say that at the present time we make no immediate proposals, but we think it right to warn and to remind the House that it may very well become our duty to put ourselves into a position to take the measures of precaution that may become necessary. . . . We desire to see a fair, proper, and reasonable settlement of the government of that great country—the Christian provinces of Turkey. We have done what we could by reason, persuasion, and argument to bring about an amelioration of that government. We have gone further than that, and told the Porte that if it refused to adopt our advice and that of other European Powers we could not take up arms to defend and save it from the consequences of its own folly.

Mr. Gladstone:—I hardly know how to express my thankfulness for the debate we have had to-night. I, with many others, had found the passage in the gracious Speech which contains the pith of the Eastern Question, an enigma that it was hardly possible to solve; but I own I reluctantly read it as implying that in the view of her Majesty's Government the time had come when they felt it to be their duty to make to Parliament a proposal for an increase in the military establishment of the country with a view to the present state of the Eastern Question. That was the construction which, so far as I knew, was generally put within political circles upon the passage of the Speech. . . . Now, I am very desirous not to misconstrue what my right hon. friend has said, but to make sure that I perfectly understand him, I will say now that I understand him to have used these words:—"Until we know the Russian demands and conditions we have no proposals to make." (Hear, hear.) I rejoice to think that my right hon. friend confirms the accuracy of the report that I make of that portion of his speech

. . . I have never known an instance when the speech of a Minister added so much, and added so much that is satisfactory, to the Speech delivered from the throne.—*H. of C.* Jan. 17th.

The satisfaction and relief which were afforded to the country by the Ministerial statements of yesterday are conspicuously illustrated by the complete absence of any disposition on the part of the House to recur to the Eastern Question this afternoon. . . . There could not be a more complete demonstration of the justice of our conviction that the neutral policy now finally adopted by the Government is in complete harmony with the general wish of the nation. . . The moment Sir Stafford Northcote had announced that the Government had no immediate intention of asking for an additional grant, the whole anxiety of the House and of the country appeared to subside. Every one seemed to draw breath more freely . . . It by no means follows that the difficulties which beset the question and which divide parties are settled, or that there is adequate harmony between the points of view from which the further solution of the great problem is likely to be regarded. On the contrary, as the negotiations now in progress assume a definite form, considerations are very likely to arise which, except in one speech, were very inadequately noticed on Thursday. That speech was the Duke of Argyll's . . . There was profound justice in the Duke's argument that we have other interests in the Eastern Question than those which are summarised in Lord Derby's despatch. There could not be a more short-sighted policy than to assume that we have no concern with the welfare of the Christian races of the East, and may confine our attention, for instance, to the Isthmus of Gallipoli. . . . It has ceased to be any business of ours to maintain "the integrity and independence" of the Turkish Empire. That memorable phrase received its death-blow in the debate of Thursday. . . . But we are not for that reason to wash our hands of all responsibility and all concern in the fate of the provinces and populations whom we have in past times done so much to retain under Turkish domination.—*T.* Jan. 19th.

By far the most satisfactory circumstance in all the recent proceedings of the Government is the definiteness and persistency with which Lord Derby has kept the Turkish Government informed of the determination of this country to lend them no assistance. . . . How, in the face of these declarations, so clear, so specific, and so repeated, it is possible for Turkey still to hope for British assistance it is nearly impossible to understand; but that she does hope it is certain, and there is but one conceivable explanation. Musurus Pasha believes Lord Beaconsfield and the War party stronger than they are, and imagines that they may yet take advantage of some such contingency as is alluded to in the Queen's Speech to assist Turkey.—*Spec.* Jan. 19th.

To those who are satisfied with the formula "that the greatest of all British interests is peace," the meeting of Parliament will probably give at least partial and temporary satisfaction. . . .

But for ourselves, we must admit that we are by no means completely reassured as to the issue. It is not that we fear greatly England's being dragged into the war. . . . What we confess we see even more reason now to fear than so terrible a catastrophe,— . . . is the conclusion of a peace by which the bloody sacrifices of the present war may be partially or even in great part wasted, so far as the only end is concerned by which they could be justified. The Duke of Argyll in his truly magnificent speech gave expression to this fear. . . The cry for immediate peace which the Queen's Speech raises, and which every one almost but the Duke of Argyll appears to echo back, seems to us to be the great danger of the present moment, and far from the merely humane and beneficent cry it seems.—*Spec.* Jan. 19th.

The opening of Parliament has produced exactly the result we ventured to predict from it. The Ministry has declared for peace, and the announcement has been followed by a general sense of relief all through the country. . . The fact is that the country was apprehensive, not of what Russia was doing, but of what England might be betrayed into doing in order to check Russia. . . . It was by the machinations which were going on at home that our real fears were roused. Now that these are set at rest, we can breathe freely and can discuss the situation at our leisure. [The *Times* proceeds to contrast the tone of Government since Parliament has met with the previous speeches of some Ministers.] We need go back no further than to Mr. Hardy's too spirited language at Edinburgh, or to the kindred utterances of a very minor official personage—Her Majesty's Postmaster-General. What, it will be asked, was the need of all this, and of a good deal more too, that fell from official lips, if the peace after all was not to be broken? . . . The course that remains for us is to prove in the most unmistakable way how thoroughly we have been misrepresented by the war party. . . . We have done enough to make it clear that we do not as a nation accept the part they wished to force upon us. We can do something more than this. We can give distinct utterance to views which they have contrived to drown or to silence. . . . Changes there must be, and eventful changes . . . Whether our influence in the final settlement is great or little, we may at least make sure that it is employed in the right direction. We may join in the endeavour to promote real and lasting reforms, to reconstruct well in a new shape what has been destroyed, and what we must admit ought to have been destroyed. —*T.* Jan. 21st.

§ 4. *The Ministry proposes to arm against Russia.*

a. A Vote of Credit demanded.—The confidence which followed upon the meeting of Parliament was soon to be rudely shaken.

On Thursday, Jan. 24th, just a week after the opening of the Session, Sir Stafford Northcote gave notice that he would, on the

following Monday, move a supplementary naval and military estimate.

In answer to a question he stated that the Russian terms of peace had not been communicated to Her Majesty's Government.

The Marquis of Hartington spoke of the real grief and alarm which would be produced throughout the country by the notice given, and drew attention to its inconsistency with the intention expressed by the Government on the first night of the Session to await the Russian terms.

> *Sir Stafford Northcote:*—Since that time a week has elapsed and not only have terms of peace not been communicated, but we have observed that a very considerable and rapid advance has been made on the part of the forces of Russia.
>
> *Lord Beaconsfield* [in reply to a similar criticism by the Duke of Argyll]:—I can only say that was an understanding not, as far as I recollect, of a formal character.—*H. of C.* and *H. of L.* Jan. 24th.

It was this announcement, together with what had become known or rumoured during the day as to the movement of the fleet and the Ministerial resignations,[1] which finally dispelled the "false confidence" induced by Sir Stafford Northcote's speech at the opening of the Session, and brought about the fully developed characteristics of the period of the Armed Neutrality.

> An announcement of the utmost gravity was yesterday made on behalf of the Ministry in Parliament, and its significance is profoundly aggravated by circumstances with which it is accompanied. . . . The crisis into which the country is thus precipitated is equally grave and unexpected. A more complete overthrow of the expectations which were encouraged by the Ministerial statements of last week could hardly be conceived.—*T.* Jan. 25th.

> Members were too much impressed by what they had heard, too much pre-occupied by their speculations on the future, to care very much what should be the terms of appointment of a Select Committee to consider the forms of business of the House of Commons. A limited number remained to gossip and to listen to gossip about Grand Committees, limitations of the opportunities of speech, needless repetitions of divisions and such-like trivialities; but the bulk poured out into lobbies and corridors to hold those more informal discussions out of which the ruling opinion of Parliament is often born.—*T.* Jan. 25th.

> The *Daily News* said the announcement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer would cause the gravest anxiety and alarm throughout the country. The withdrawal of Lord Derby and

[1] *Post*, p. 310.

> Lord Carnarvon would be learnt without astonishment. The only surprise which will be felt is that Lord Salisbury does not retire too. But he is stronger in words and phrases than in character and purpose.—(Jan. 25th.)

b. Lord Carnarvon's resignation.—During the first three weeks of the year the play of diverging tendencies within the Cabinet had kept it in a constant state of activity, and had brought it to the verge of disruption.

At a Cabinet Council which was held on Wednesday, January 23rd, matters came to a crisis. Dissatisfied with what they considered the supine attitude of the Government, a number of members of Parliament holding pronounced "red" views held a consultation on the 22nd, and deputed some of their number, among whom were Sir Drummond Wolff, Sir Robert Peel and Sir Charles Russell, to go to Sir Stafford Northcote to urge upon him that one of the specified "British Interests," namely Constantinople, was seriously endangered.

On the evening of January 24th, Sir Charles Dilke presented prizes to the Science and Art students at Hammersmith. It is significant of the absorbing interest of the topic that he should have introduced politics on such an occasion. He spoke of the past forty-eight hours as a time of great anxiety.

> Those who had been behind the scenes had been in a state of extreme anxiety and alarm because a deputation of members of Parliament had waited upon Sir Stafford Northcote. That deputation represented seventy members of the House of Commons who were in favour of a policy of action.—*Sir Charles Dilke*, Jan. 24th.

At a Cabinet Council held on Wednesday, January 23rd, the resolution was taken to ask for a vote of six millions and to send the fleet to Constantinople. The orders to this effect which were immediately telegraphed out to the Admiral, were countermanded when the fleet was on the point of entering the Dardanelles;[1] but when the fleet was ordered to Constantinople Lord Derby (who was ill at the time) and Lord Carnarvon resigned.

Rumours of a crisis in the Cabinet were rife, but Lord Derby's position remained in doubt until in the House of Lords on Monday the 28th, he explained that not being able to concur in the order given to the fleet he had in fact resigned, but that on the return of the fleet the cause of difference with his colleagues had disappeared, and he had been able to withdraw his resignation.

[1] *Post*, p. 312

Lord Carnarvon explained his position in the House of Lords on the 25th.

> The reasons which have influenced me to resign are two-fold—first, the order given to the fleet, and secondly, the vote of which notice has been given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons. . . . On the 2nd of the present month, in making some observations in reply to a deputation which waited on me, I spoke of the character of the war and the attitude of Her Majesty's Government. . . . The Prime Minister thought it his duty to condemn very severely the language I had used. . . . In a paper which I drew up on the subject. . . . I recapitulated what had passed, and deliberately reaffirmed the propositions I had laid down. The noble earl the Prime Minister was good enough to ask me for a copy of that paper, and so the matter ended. No further or public disavowal was offered with respect to what I had stated to the deputation, and I felt justified, and I still continue to feel justified in thinking that when no such disavowal was offered, I had not grossly misinterpreted the sentiments of Her Majesty's Government. ("Hear, hear," from the Opposition.) The next episode was on the 12th of January, when the Cabinet discussed whether or not it was desirable to send a fleet to the Dardanelles. I expressed a very decided opinion against that proposal. No decision was then taken, but on the 15th it was resolved to adopt the resolution and send the fleet to Gallipoli. My lords, I entertained the strongest objection to that measure, both with regard to the time at which it was proposed, and as to the proceeding itself; and on the following day I wrote to the Prime Minister requesting him to submit my resignation to the Queen so soon as the fleet should sail. Meanwhile circumstances occurred to change his mind, and I learnt that the order to the fleet was cancelled. In order to make this clear, I think it is better to read a letter which I addressed to the Prime Minister:—
>
> [After alluding to his contingent resignation, and the countermanded order to the fleet, and after reiterating his statement that he was not prepared to agree to any armed intervention, or any course of a similar nature, Lord Carnarvon's letter continued:—]
>
> "The anxiety which I own to have felt on the subject has been greatly relieved by the explicit language of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which he explained that the Government would not, until it was clear that the Russian conditions are unsatisfactory, make any proposals for the increase of armaments. Relying, therefore, upon this as a trustworthy exposition of the views of the Government, I feel that I may for the present content myself with the statement which I have endeavoured to express as clearly as possible in reference to my own position. But it remains for you to consider whether this view, which is satisfactory to me, and on which my continuance in office depends, is also satisfactory to you and my colleagues."
>
> My lords, in reply, the noble earl the Prime Minister wrote me

a courteous letter, and though it is marked "Private," I feel that there is no breach of confidence in reading the concluding sentence of it:—

"I shall not, therefore, submit your resignation to Her Majesty. Such a step would deprive me of a colleague I value, and at any rate should be reserved for a period when there is some important difference of opinion between us, which at present does not seem to be the case."

My letter was written on the 18th inst., the day after the meeting of Parliament, and the Prime Minister's answer was dated the same day. I thought, therefore, I might safely conclude that the proposal to send the fleet into the Turkish waters was at least for some time abandoned. But on the 23rd of January the proposal was again made in the Cabinet, and after a discussion it was decided that the fleet should be sent. I felt I had only one course to pursue. It is expressed in this letter:—

[Lord Carnarvon then read his letter of resignation, and the Premier's reply, informing him that his resignation was accepted.]

Your lordships will thus observe that three times within three weeks it has been my misfortune to find myself at serious variance with the Cabinet in a matter of the highest possible importance, and that twice within that time I felt constrained to place my resignation in the hands of the Prime Minister. Twice, no doubt, the order for sending the fleet to the Turkish waters has been cancelled; but I cannot conceal from myself that it was so cancelled, not from an agreement of principle in the view I took of such an order, but owing to some accident which interposed at the last moment. (Hear, hear.) I rejoice, that the Government have found themselves at liberty to cancel it. I rejoice, also, that if it has been my misfortune to separate myself from my colleagues it has been from a difference of feeling, however serious, rather than from any direct act; but I conceive that what I have stated to your lordships shows that for some time there has been a wide divergence of opinion between us as to the principle on which our policy should be conducted. . . . I know there are many questions on which the members of a Cabinet must agree to differ; but there are also questions so important that on them a man ought not to waive his own convictions. I am sensible of the forbearance extended to me by my colleagues, and I can only hope that I have never urged my unwelcome doctrines with undue earnestness. I have seen for some time that this issue must come. We were travelling along a road together to a point where two paths separate.

Lord Beaconsfield [declined to follow the noble earl through all his observations.] I must say that I am at a loss to understand that there was sufficient reason for the step taken by him in quitting the Councils of Her Majesty's Government. . . . We were not conscious that in sending orders to the fleet to enter the Turkish waters we were doing anything but carrying out that

policy which we had frankly expounded to this and the other House of Parliament, which Parliament adopted, and which the country has supported us in maintaining, [the policy] of conditional neutrality, which Parliament and the country so freely accepted. But if neutrality depends on holding that the great interests of the country are not to be maintained and vindicated, then I am no longer in favour of neutrality, but in favour of the interests of the country and the honour of the Sovereign. (Loud cheers.)

Lord Granville inquired whether any other members of the Cabinet had resigned.

Lord Beaconsfield:—I always thought it a high, valuable, and ancient privilege of any one retiring from a Government that he should announce the fact to Parliament himself in the first instance. On that privilege I will not trench.—*H. of L.* Jan. 25th.

The answer was bold to the verge of audacity, but nothing would have been heard of this ancient privilege if Lord Derby had not contemplated retiring.—*T.* Jan. 26th.

The *Daily Telegraph* says Lord Carnarvon's resignation leaves the Cabinet now quite united.—(Jan. 26th.)

The *Standard* says however injurious the rupture may be, it would have been still more injurious to the Government to retain a colleague who on questions of foreign policy represents a school of thought wholly alien from the majority of the Cabinet.—(Jan. 26th.)

The *Spectator* considers the effect which the recent personal explanation will have on the reputation of the Conservative leaders. That they still further discredit the Premier is not perhaps of very much importance. He has a majority which he will never have again, and while that majority lasts, it will apparently support Lord Beaconsfield whatever he may do or leave undone. Grave politicians may be alarmed to find that while the Government was preaching peace, Lord Beaconsfield was pressing measures tending directly to provoke war. Lord Salisbury's action in the crisis will be found, when the present hubbub is over, to have profoundly modified the English estimate of his character. Mainly from a belief that the terrible Marquis, whatever errors he might commit, would never vacillate, the people had looked on him as the leader in the policy of resistance to Lord Beaconsfield's designs. Lord Derby has suffered even more, though it may prove less permanently. His hold upon the confidence of the country was the nearly universal belief that he was a "safe" man. He would prevent the erratic man of genius whom his house introduced to power from bringing calamity upon the country. He has not done it. The only statesman of the four who comes out of the proceedings with an increased reputation is Lord Carnarvon.—(Feb. 2nd.)

c. The Russian Conditions of Peace.—Lord Carnarvon, when speaking of the order to the fleet, spoke also of its countermand;

and, indeed within a few hours of its being noised abroad that the fleet had been despatched upon its momentous errand, a rumour sprang up that matters had taken a fresh turn—a turn which was represented by the *Daily Telegraph* in the following light:—

> Four or five hours after the Ministers had declared their intention of moving for supplies, it was bruited about in the House of Commons that the long-delayed terms had suddenly come to light. Expedited or elicited by the magic of a decisive policy, the Russian conditions, it was rumoured, became known a few hours after it had been explained that their concealment was obliging the British Government to adopt strong preparatives against the danger of awaiting them any longer.—*D. T.* Jan. 25th.

The preliminaries of peace had not yet been accepted by the Turkish envoys, and we may presume the haggling was still going on;[1] but on the Thursday evening (Jan. 24th) a telegram from Mr. Layard was received at the Foreign Office, in which Mr. Layard communicated the outline of the conditions which the Russians demanded, as he understood them to be.[2]

There was nothing in these terms, it appeared, which the English Government was inclined to treat as a *casus belli*, and thereupon the order to the fleet was countermanded. The next day (Friday, Jan. 25th) Count Schouvaloff communicated to Lord Derby the Russian bases of peace,[3] which did not very materially differ from those which had been foreshadowed in the preceding summer, or from those which were afterwards embodied in the Treaty of San Stefano.

On that same Friday, that is, on the very night after the notice of the vote of credit had been given, the Premier and the Chancellor of the Exchequer respectively explained to Parliament the changed position of affairs.

[1] *Ante*, p. 269.

[2] *Turkey*, iii. 1878, No. 34. With respect to the Straits, Mr. Layard meant to telegraph that the question was to be settled between the Sultan and the Emperor; but by a fortunate error which curiously corrected Mr. Layard's erroneous information on this head, the message as received by Lord Derby read "between the Congress and the Emperor."

On the 26th a further telegram was received from Mr. Layard, giving the heads of the bases of peace in greater detail, and in particular stating that Russia and Turkey were to come to a separate understanding with regard to the Straits. Mr. Layard characteristically enough closed his summary of the terms with the comment, "It is scarcely necessary to say this amounts to destruction of Turkish empire in Europe."—(*Ibid.* No. 40.)

But meanwhile Count Schouvaloff had repeated to Lord Derby Prince Gortschakoff's assurance "that we do not intend to settle by ourselves European questions having reference to the peace which is to be made."—(*Ibid.* No. 39.)

The official text of the preliminaries was telegraphed to Lord Derby by Lord A. Loftus from St. Petersburg on Feb. 7th.—(*Turkey*, xii. 1878, No. 3.)

[3] *Turkey*, iii. 1878, No. 38.

Lord Beaconsfield:—Since we took this step [ordering the fleet to Constantinople] we have become acquainted with the proposed conditions of peace, and having examined those conditions of peace, we are of opinion that they furnish the basis of an armistice. [Therefore the Admiral had been directed not to enter the Straits.]

Lord Beaconsfield (in reply to further questions from Lord Granville), said that so far as the English Government knew there was no armistice in existence; the conditions of peace had no reference to the terms of the armistice.—*H. of L.* Jan. 25th.

Sir Stafford Northcote indignantly repudiated the suggestion that the Government were aware when they gave notice of the vote of credit that the Russian terms were under the consideration of the Porte.

We had no knowledge of anything of the kind. I am really unable even now to answer positively the question whether the terms of peace have arrived and are known to the Government. Certainly last night nothing of that sort had occurred. [Up to the time the House met last night the terms had not been communicated to the English Government, and they were not in a condition to say whether they had been communicated to Turkey.] In the course of yesterday evening certain communications of a private and not of an authentic or formal character were made to us on the subject of those terms. . . . On Wednesday evening we decided that orders should be sent to the fleet to proceed to the Dardanelles to keep open the waterway and to protect British life and property in the event of tumults at Constantinople. (Loud cheers.) But, Sir, in consequence of the communications to which I have referred, those private communications which we received late last night, a further telegram was despatched to the fleet, ordering the fleet, if they were at the mouth of the Dardanelles, where they had been directed to call for orders, to wait until they received further instructions. (Loud cheers from the Opposition.) That is the position of affairs at the present moment.—*H. of C.* Jan. 25th.[1]

Yesterday was a day of swiftly-changing emotions, such as rarely happens in the history of any nation. . . The prospects of the morning were as black and bitter as the north wind that swept the streets. The funds fell. Not the Stock Exchange only—all the Bourses of Europe were troubled. As the day advanced it began to be declared that the terms of peace were known, and were singularly moderate. Then every minute confirmed the opinion that peace was secure, and there was a rebound in the price of securities exceeding the fall of the morning. Still there was uneasiness, which could be dissipated only by official declarations. . . . When Sir Stafford Northcote proceeded to declare that the Government had given orders to the fleet on Wednesday night to

[1] On Jan. 31st, Sir Stafford Northcote repeated his explanation of the incident at some length.

move up the Dardanelles, there was considerable cheering among the younger and more bellicose of their followers; but when, almost in the same breath, the Chancellor added that, in consequence of the communications that had been received, another telegram had been despatched countermanding the first order, there was a burst of vehement cheers from the pacific Opposition. There never was so prompt a change. At one moment the War Party were jubilant and their opponents depressed with anxiety, and the next the latter were joyous and the former discomfited and resentful. . . . To the scandal of more elderly and sedate members, an irrepressible discontented company got up, and, leaving Sir Stafford to finish his speech as he could, hastened off to hear what might be said in the Lords. . . . The night closed as calmly as the morning was threatening. Lord Carnarvon is out of office, and that appears to be the net result of the conflicting emotions of the day. Lord Derby's position may be uncertain, but, with the change in the situation, it will probably not be difficult to induce him to remain at the Foreign Office. If the Ministry had only restrained themselves for twenty-four hours; nay, if they had first exhausted the means of information at their own command, they would have escaped action that has made themselves and the nation look a little ridiculous.—*T.* Jan. 26th.

The *Spectator* complains that Providence would almost seem to arrange political crises to spite the weekly journals. They always happen or culminate late on Friday evening. The writer can see nothing to justify the new departure, and finds the only explanation in the growing irritation of the Tory rank and file, who on Tuesday besieged Sir Stafford Northcote, who are eager for a spirited foreign policy, and who have overborne the counsels of cooler heads and more pitiful hearts, and compelled the willing Premier and the unwilling Government to show that, whether cause exists or not they are ready to defy Russia and take the consequences.—(Jan. 26th.)

The bases of peace were stated by Sir Stafford Northcote in the House of Commons on Monday evening, January 28th.[1] The grudging tone in which he spoke of every curtailment of the Turkish power is in marked contrast with the cheers of the Opposition.

Among the papers which will be in the hands of members to morrow morning there will be found at page 14 the statement of the bases of peace communicated by Count Schouvaloff last Friday. These are the terms:—First. Bulgaria, within the limits of the Bulgarian nationality not less than that of the Conference, to be an autonomous tributary principality; with a national Christian governor, a native militia, and no Turkish troops except at some points to be determined. (Opposition cheers.) Secondly. The

[1] Extracts from the Blue Book, *Turkey*, iii. 1878, were given in the London papers of January 31st.

independence of Montenegro—(Opposition cheers)—with increase of territory—(cheers)—equivalent to the military *status quo*, frontier to be decided hereafter; thirdly, independence of Roumania—(Opposition cheers)—with sufficient territorial indemnity: fourthly, independence of Servia—(renewed cheers from the Opposition)—with rectification of frontiers—("Oh," from some Ministerialists)—fifthly, autonomous administration to be sufficiently guaranteed to Bosnia and Herzegovina—(renewed Opposition cheers)—sixthly, similar reforms for the other Christian provinces—(loud Opposition cheers)—seventhly, indemnity to Russia for the expenses of the war in a pecuniary, territorial or other form—("Hear, hear," and some Ministerial laughter)—lastly, ulterior understanding for safeguarding the rights and interests of Russia in the Straits. Now, be those conditions good or bad, they are at all events conditions of a very sweeping character. [The extension given to the term Bulgaria] may be illustrated roughly in this way—by supposing that from the whole of England you were to set apart a portion beginning, say, with Northumberland and Durham, coming right down to Devonshire, cutting off Wales, Cornwall, and perhaps Middlesex and the eastern angle of England—(hear, hear)—and erect that into an autonomous tributary principality. (Hear, hear.) I am not finding fault with these conditions at all. (Cheers from the Opposition.) I am merely desiring that the Committee will consider whether or not they are to be considered as serious conditions which should have serious consideration. [Then again,] everybody agreed, with regard to certain portions of Turkey, that it was desirable that an autonomy should be founded, but when it came to be considered what autonomy was to mean, there was found to be a considerable divergence of opinion. A phrase was then invented which was accepted, I believe, by all parties. The phrase was "administrative autonomy," by which was meant something in the nature of local self-government, under the direct government of the Sultan; but by the expression now used we find that it is not administrative autonomy that is contemplated, but the erection of an autonomous tributary principality.—(Opposition cheers.)—*Sir S. Northcote, H. of C.* Jan. 28th.

In the manifestly opposite lights in which the Government and the Opposition regarded the large area proposed for the emancipated province and the nature of the autonomy to be given to it, we see an indication of an impending re-opening of the domestic controversy as to the merits of the "violet" solution which had been suspended during the progress of the war.

d. The Vote of Credit resisted as significant of a "red" policy.—It remained to be seen whether the Government, now that they were informed of the bases of peace, would revert to the attitude which they had adopted at the opening of the Session.

The question the Government will have to consider between this and Monday evening is whether it is discreet to persevere with the vote for six millions of which they have given notice. . . . Nothing was to be done until the terms of peace were known, and not then if the terms proved satisfactory. We have Lord Beaconsfield's own statement that the proposed terms of peace do, in the judgment of the Government, form the basis of a peace, and no one can examine them without concurring in the Ministerial opinion. Their substance will be found stated elsewhere, and the declaration that Russia would surprise the world by its moderation is certainly not falsified. It is announced that the Porte has accepted them already, and it could not have expected more favourable terms. If the whole foundation of the threatened application to Parliament thus fails, the application itself must be withdrawn, and we cannot but hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will tell the House of Commons on Monday that the necessity of asking for six millions has disappeared, and he himself will be spared the trouble of devising the means of raising such a sum.—*T.* Jan. 26th.

It is already understood that Lord Derby has returned to his colleagues. There was a Cabinet Council yesterday [Sunday] afternoon—a most unusual event—and he was present at it for the first time since his illness. The expedition of the fleet having been countermanded and explanations given, he has rejoined the Ministry. It had been rumoured throughout Saturday that the withdrawal of his resignation would be contingent on the withdrawal of the vote for six millions. [We hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will this afternoon announce that the vote of credit is deferred.]—*T.* Jan. 28th.

The hopes of the *Times* were doomed to disappointment. On Monday evening, January 28th, the vote of credit was proposed by Sir Stafford Northcote. In the course of a long speech he took up the story from the collapse of the Turkish resistance.

Sir Stafford Northcote said :—

Events were marching with a rapidity enough to take one's breath away. Sometimes came the news from one quarter, and sometimes from another, of the inadequacy of the defences of Boulair, of the dangers to the peninsula, and the great probability of a rapid advance being made upon the way to the Dardanelles.

[But, it was asked, as the Government had countermanded the movement of the fleet, why should they persevere with the vote of credit?] The two cases rest upon different grounds. The question of sending up the fleet for the purpose of keeping the way or to preserve life and protect property at a particular juncture was a question of the moment; the question of the attitude which England is to take in the council of nations which must shortly meet, is a question which is not of the moment.

We ask for these millions not necessarily that the money or the greater part of it should be expended at all—(cheers and counter cheers)—provided you gave us free leave and authority and sanction to spend it if we think necessary. . . . We go, we should propose to go, with no desire whatever of using force; it is not for that we ask it at all, but we desire to go armed with this, which would be, not a vote of credit, but a vote of confidence—(Ministerial cheers)—entitling us to speak as we should wish to speak in the counsels of Europe.

The Marquis of Hartington:—If money were required for the necessity of the service, it would no doubt be best that the question should be decided without delay; but the statement just made, based on papers not yet in our hands, places matters in a totally different position. This vote is in fact the form in which the Government have decided to ask this House for a vote of confidence in them, not only in the declarations now made, but also upon their past conduct in various particulars which have now for the first time been unveiled.

Mr. John Bright:—I should like to have a fair explanation whether it be necessary that England should go with shotted cannon and with revolvers into a consideration of this great question—("Oh, oh," and "Hear, hear")—with the Plenipotentiaries of the various Powers in the Conference which is intended to be held. (Opposition cheers,)

Mr. Gladstone:—I came down to the House under the impression that we were to be asked simply for a military vote, upon considerations based upon military tactics. I own I was entirely prepared to go forward with the debate to-morrow. But my right hon. friend admits that he has greatly widened the basis of the question. He asks for the vote as a vote of confidence in the Government, and he asks for a vote of confidence in the Government on the ground of the conduct of the Government in relation to this Turkish question.—*H. of C.* Jan. 28th.

The *Times* speaks of the futility of the proposed method of measuring the force of English opinion. That opinion necessarily varies with the various questions that must be considered. On the question of the Dardanelles there would be a unanimous declaration that if the Straits are thrown open at all they must be thrown open to all nations; while on the subject of the delimitation of Bulgaria, on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer laid so much stress yesterday, the feeling would be that we were only concerned in seeing that the limits embraced, as far as possible, a homogeneous people. The notion of giving authority to a delegate at a Conference where the most widely different questions are to be discussed by voting beforehand six millions which need not be spent is as simple as it is original.—(Jan. 29th.)

The application for the vote of six millions had, in fact, been put on an entirely new footing. It now no longer appeared as a

mere defensive measure taken because one of the specified conditions of England's neutrality might be supposed to be threatened; it now became the announcement that the English Government, once more emerging from their isolation, meant to take a part in the affairs of the Balkan Peninsula, and were contemplating the possibility of war to enforce their policy, quite outside the specified interests of the Conditional Neutrality.

Thus the "red" and the "violet" policies were once more brought into competition with one another for adoption by those who should hold parley with foreign Powers in the name of England.

The English Government, it is true, by the mouth of Sir Stafford Northcote, when pressed in Parliament by the advocates of the "violet" policy, yielded a theoretical recognition of the claims of the subject populations; but even Sir Stafford Northcote spoke in a grudging tone, and the Government and their supporters were bitterly hostile to the practical measure of Emancipation embodied in the Russian conditions, and afterwards in the Treaty of San Stefano. They seemed unable to conceive any alternative to the maintenance of the Turkish Power, other than an extension of Russian influence. Their chief anxiety was to get better terms for Turkey, and to cut down as far as possible the application of the "violet" solution.

On the other hand the constituents of the great body of Public Opinion which believed itself to be the preponderating opinion of the country, although it was not obtaining the recognition due to it, rejoiced that such a great emancipation should be extorted from Turkey, and were determined to do what they could to prevent the English Ministry from throwing the weight of England's diplomacy, still more from drawing England's sword, against a solution which the true opinion of England would approve in its salient features, whatever might be thought of some of the incidents of it.[1]

> The declared objects of both parties in the House are, as far as words go, very much the same. If the Ministry and its supporters are concerned about the honour and influence of the country, so, too, are the Opposition. If the Opposition are anxious to secure peace, so, too, are the Ministry. . . . We shall find remaining one great question, and one only, which is dividing the House and the country into two opposite camps. The chief point on which the Ministry have given no definite assurances is

[1] *Post*, chap. xviii. § 5.

the very important one of the course they intend pursuing with reference to the subject populations of Turkey. The real alarm of the Opposition is not that we shall be betrayed into war. This, possible as it is still, becomes every day less and less likely. But that English influence should be employed to secure for Turkey the largest possible area of misgovernment is a result which they dread. They are not willing, in Mr. Trevelyan's words, to put the sword of the country into the hands of those who are suspected of intending to make this use of it, drawn or undrawn. When Mr. Bright, in his speech [1] on Thursday evening gave his opponents in the House credit for a wish to maintain peace, the statement was received with Ministerial cheers. His declaration that peace was the interest, not of the country alone, but of every country, was greeted with the same signs of approval. But when he went on to say that there could be no wish in any quarter to support perpetually the grinding and odious tyranny of Turkey, there was no applause expressed.—*T.* Feb. 2nd.

The champions of the "violet" opinion were vigilant to offer resistance to any development of an active "red" policy, whether this development should take the form of measures tending to a needless war, to be waged on the plea of danger to one of the specified "British Interests," or whether it should take the form of hostility,—perhaps pushed to the length of armed interference, perhaps diplomatic only—to the curtailment of the Turkish power in the Christian provinces. The vote of credit was regarded as the outward and visible sign of an approaching development of an active "red" policy, and resistance to the vote was looked upon, both in Parliament and out of doors, as resistance to that policy under whatever specious aspect it might be presented.

§ 5. *The Resistance in Parliament.* (*Mr. Forster's Amendment.*)

The resistance to the vote of credit in Parliament was formally opened on January 31st when Mr. W. E. Forster moved an amendment as follows:—

"That this House, having been informed in Her Majesty's gracious Speech that the conditions on which Her Majesty's neutrality is founded had not been infringed by either belligerent engaged in the war in the East of Europe, and having since received no information sufficient to justify a departure from the policy of neutrality and peace, sees no reason for adding to the burdens of the people by voting unnecessary supplies."

[He said the interpretation put upon the proposal of the Government would be that they considered the terms of peace

[1] See *post*, p. 320.

unsatisfactory.] And that is confirmed by the manner in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer dwelt on those terms and described them; and that explanation has been clung to with the desperate tenacity of drowning men by the war party. These terms do not, in my mind, in any way directly affect British interests. The first of them is this:—

"Within the limits of nationality, not less than those of the Conference, Bulgaria to be an autonomous Principality with a national Christian Government, a Native Militia, and no Turkish troops except at certain places to be fixed."

There are some members, no doubt, who are sorry that that has been asked for by Russia, but for my part I am not sorry. (Hear, hear.) Any attempt on the part of the Government or their supporters to pass a war vote or to get us into any warlike action to protest against this first and perhaps most important of these conditions would, I believe, be disavowed by the enormous majority of the country. ("Hear, hear," and "No.") I only wish that those who say "No" could put this matter in issue before the country. (Cheers.)

Mr. Cross:—[The whole gist of Mr. Forster's speech is to create an impression that there is a war party]. . . . It has been said that we do not know our own mind; that we have spoken with two voices; that from the same source have flowed both sweet water and bitter. But I defy any one to say that in the language we have held to Turkey there has been any sweet. Plenty of bitter water has been given to Turkey, but not one drop of sweet. . . . I say that speeches have been made in the country in which there has been a lying spirit (loud cheers); I say that in the speeches and in the resolution now before the House there is an evil spirit lurking, though it is difficult to discover. People must get rid of the notion that the Government wants to go to war.

[He detailed the progress of events from the first talk of an armistice, repeating at every stage "The Russians were still advancing!"] We find that the slower the progress of these negotiations, the more rapid is the Russian advance (cheers), and where the Russians may be at this moment we do not know; but I presume if they are going on at the same rate of speed as they were doing when we last heard of them, they are considerably nearer Constantinople than they were. ("Hear, hear," from the Opposition.) That may be very agreeable news to some hon. gentlemen opposite, but it is not quite fair to the Turks . . . If delay there has been, it has been through the movements of the Grand Duke Nicholas. But all this time Russia is still advancing. The Emperor, I know, pledges his word of honour that he will not go to Constantinople, except for strategical reasons; but when the bases are sent by Russia, when Russia knows that the bases are accepted by Turkey, where is the strategical reason for advancing on Constantinople?

Mr. Laing said he had listened with extreme pain to the

almost passionate appeals which the Home Secretary had made to excite heated feeling on the grave subject before the House.

Mr. Bright :—I know they say, for we have heard it to-night from the Home Secretary, that we have charged them—I suppose he will say falsely, because he says there has been a lying spirit among us—with speaking with two voices to the country. . . . . Do you mean to say in the face of this assembly that the speeches at Aylesbury and the Guildhall were the same as the speeches of Lord Salisbury and Lord Carnarvon—the same as the speeches of Lord Derby? You know that if you said that, you would say what was not true.

[However great the suffering and bloodshed,] let us not reject, if it is offered to us, whatever compensation can possibly be given to the people who have endured these sufferings. I should say that the more terrible has been the cost of the war, the more our hearts have been stirred up by listening to these details, the more we should rejoice if by the power and statesmanship of Russia, by the consent of the Powers of Europe, a larger and larger area of European territory be included in that great salvation from Turkish rule. ("Oh," and "Hear, hear.")—*H. of C.* Jan. 31st.

The resistance to the vote of credit, as we shall see, broke down under the stress of what is perhaps the most striking example of "Erubescence.[1]" As on a former occasion when the pressure of Public Opinion upon the Government (just as they were about to take a critical step in the negotiations) had been suddenly relaxed by reason of the hostility excited by the vision of Russian armies approaching Constantinople,[2] so it was now. And as it had been sixteen months before, so now, the "erubescence" which so opportunely supervened to smooth the path of the English Government owed its rise to a misapprehension.

The resistance to the vote of credit broke down; still, the various stages of the measure, as it passed through Parliament, afford opportunities of which some advantages were taken, to protest against the "red" and to press the claims of the "violet" policy.

Mr. Courtney :—All the Ministers had said, almost in so many words, that they were going into the Conference to put themselves side by side with Austria, to take their stand on the Treaty of 1856, and to compel Russia to accept its conditions. These, he felt sure, were aims of which the people of England would not approve, and he owed it as a duty to his constituents to resist such a policy. He could not possibly admit that this was in any sense a united nation. That epithet was conspicuously untrue of its attitude towards the Eastern Question. . . . . There

[1] *Post*, chap. xviii. § 2.

[2] *Ante*, p. 73.

was, then, no such unanimity as the Chancellor of the Exchequer imagined, except, perhaps, on one solitary point—the resolve, namely, that the Dardanelles Straits either remain as they are at present, or that they should be open to the fleets of all nations. (Hear.) Every Englishman was agreed that no nation should have a privilege. ("Agreed.") . . . . . The interests of Austria were very different from our own. Whereas we desired either that the Dardanelles should be closed to all nations or thrown open to all nations, Austria was said to be interested in preventing the autonomy of Bosnia and the independence of Servia and Roumania, and the danger was lest we should be tempted to join Austria to support these two very different interests. If Austria were to attack the Russian forces in Turkey from the north and England were to attack them from the south, the Russian forces would find themselves in a very awkward position. (Loud and prolonged Ministerial cheers.) . . . . . Hon. members opposite became excited the moment the prospect of an easy and successful war presented itself (cries of "Oh"); and when he saw their excitement and also the excitement prevailing among the democracy, he confessed he was astonished to hear hon. members speak of the peril of war as past. The peril past! Why, the coming Conference was full of peril. (Ministerial cheers.) . . . The only hope he and those who agreed with him had was, in being true to themselves and in not flinching for one moment, however small their minority might be, from endeavouring to avert the perils which lay before them. . . . . There was only one interest which we had to guard, and that was the keeping open or the keeping shut of the Dardanelles. Let them go to the Conference with that object alone. If they did anything else let it be to uphold the settlement proposed by Russia of the question of the subject races. (Cries of "Oh").—*H. of C.* Feb. 7th.

Sir Stafford Northcote:—Questions have now to be settled which will be of the largest character, and which will amount to the reconstruction of the system of South-eastern Europe. We consider that in the discussion of these changes and in the settlement of that reconstruction it will be the duty of England to take her part, for two reasons and on two different principles; [first, to see that the interests she is bound to guard are not injuriously affected; and, secondly, she has a right to claim, and feels it her duty to claim, her place in the councils of nations.]

There were at least three points to which we ought to pay considerable attention in the Conference:—

(1) It is a matter of serious importance that the navigation of the Straits and the access to the Black Sea should be so regulated that there shall be freedom of commerce in the Black Sea. This we may lay down with absolute certainty, that whatever arrangement may be entered into, it ought to be one that will render it impossible for any one single Power to close up the entrance to the Black Sea.

(2) It is of great consequence to England that in any arrange-

ments that are made there should be as little as possible of a threat held out on the flank of our communication with India through Egypt.

(3) It is of great importance to us, and, I believe, to the whole civilised world, that a fair and probably durable settlement should be made of the condition of those countries which will have to be reorganised.

I wish to repudiate with all the energy I can command the suggestion that there is any desire on our part to cripple or fetter the extension of free or good government among the Bulgarians and the other Christian communities. (Cheers.) I listened with astonishment to the imputations which have been made not only on the Government generally, but on myself personally, as if we had some jealousy of good government to the Bulgarians and the other Christian populations. (Cheers.) It would not only be contrary to my own natural feelings, but it is contrary to language which I have repeatedly used myself.

Mr. Gladstone [said there was a good deal in Sir Stafford Northcote's speech to which he had listened with sincere satisfaction]: Nothing could be more equitable and fair than the language of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the point as to the navigation of the Straits by vessels of war. He laid down no rigid dogma, he evoked no phantoms, he proposed to himself no impossibilities. He carefully avoided separating the interests of this country in regard to the passage of the Straits by vessels of war from the general interests. On this point I am not only satisfied, but gratified. Then we come to that which is undoubtedly the heart of this question, namely, what the right hon. gentleman has introduced as the fair, probable, and endurable settlement of the countries now to be reorganised. The condition of these twelve or fourteen millions of subjects in European Turkey is the heart and root of this matter. . . . My right hon. friend says he has no desire to fetter the extension of free and good government, but when he read out originally the terms of the bases of peace he did say that they cut deep into the whole framework of the Turkish Empire. But my right hon. friend must feel that—I do not say what he said, because it appeared more from what he did not say—when he went over the terms of the bases of peace the reception of them, in the language of his own speech, was not that of a man who is greatly pleased with their substance, and the reception of them on the benches behind him was, I must say, nothing less than a silence that was profound and almost lugubrious. (Opposition cheers.)

There is a misapprehension in my mind which I cannot conceal, and which has been expressed, I think, to some extent already in this debate, which has relation to one of the Powers that will take part in the Conference—I mean Austria. (Hear, hear.) It is absolutely necessary that the vigilant eye of this country should be directed to the proceedings of Austria. (Opposition cheers.) For sixty years past it has been the unfor-

tunate lot of Austria in nearly every European combination—I believe in every one where two sides could be taken—to be upon the wrong side. (Hear, hear.) She has unhappily adopted, I know not from what amount of interior pressure—but it has been her custom to adopt—the principle of insisting that the relations and conditions of the people in the provinces outside her borders were to be governed by considerations drawn from her domestic convenience. . . . I recollect with pleasure that the present Austrian ambassador in London, when he was head of the Austrian Government, recommended this very plan of provincial tributary autonomy for the Christian subjects as the best solution of the great Eastern problem; but I think it necessary to point out that Austria, which I admit has internal difficulties to contend with, has too much temptation and tendency to insist on the regulation of the affairs of these provinces according to her internal convenience.

What I think we have a fair right to ask of Her Majesty's Government I will venture to state in a few plain and simple words. Certain terms have been arrived at between Turkey and Russia. Russia has determined, and Turkey has granted, certain concessions on behalf of the subject races. What I ask of the Government is that their influence shall not be used to diminish the amount of those concessions upon which Russia and Turkey have agreed. (Hear, hear.) That I believe to be a fair proposition. ("No, no," "Hear, hear," and cries of "Question.") Then, sir, it appears that there are some in this House who think that England may lawfully and justifiably go into the Conference and join hands with some other Power for the sake of cutting down and emasculating the boon which Turkey and Russia have agreed upon. . . . There is but one subject of difficulty in the Conference, and that is the adjustment of this question with the new nationalities of the liberated provinces. It is a subject of great difficulty, but if the Government goes about it with a spirit of equity why does my right hon. friend want a vote of £6,000,000 to enable him to speak his mind? (Hear, hear.) Is he afraid of Russia? If he were going to enlarge what Russia has won for these provinces he might be afraid of Russia. Does he suppose that Russia will not co-operate with him when he proposes to give effect to what she proposes?

I cannot be satisfied until I know as to the general scope of our Ministers or representatives at the Conference that their task is not to be to limit the concessions Russia and Turkey are jointly ready to make. Upon that proposition I take my stand as upon a principle.—*H. of C.* Feb. 8th.

Lord Granville expressed a hope that in the Conference Her Majesty's Government would not be a party to abating in the interests of Turkey the advantages which ought to be gained by the Christian subjects of the Porte.—*H. of L.* Feb. 20th.

§ 6. *The Last Agitation.*

No sooner were the first announcements made of the vote of credit and of the movement of the fleet, than the alarm-note was sounded by the sentinels of the "violet" party, and agitation, suspended during the week which followed the meeting of Parliament, (the week of "False Confidence"), blazed up again with increased vehemence.

On the evening of January 24th, a circular was issued from the National Federation of Liberal Associations:—

> Under these alarming circumstances it is the duty of all who desire to protect the country from the crime and the horrors of war to use every effort, by petition and otherwise, to induce Parliament to refuse the vote asked for. We beg of you to take immediate action.

Two days later, the *Daily News*[1] mentions preparations for town meetings to oppose the vote of credit at Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham, and publishes numerous extracts to show the temper of the provincial press.

> The hands of the Liberal leaders in both Houses of Parliament, and especially in the House of Commons, should be strengthened without delay. If we are to have war, the guilt of it must be clearly laid upon the right shoulders. It will not be a national, but a Ministerial war, and the nation must stand clear.—*From the Birmingham Post.*

> The situation is very serious. If England were a despotism we should say it was perilous in the extreme. But England is not a despotism, and even the shameful period of Lord Beaconsfield's ascendency is now rapidly drawing to a close. We much mistake our countrymen in Parliament and out of it, if this latest stupendous blunder of the Premier is not his last. . . . We have the assurances of the Liberal leaders, who have never, like Sir Stafford Northcote, basely broken their plighted word, that they will leave no means unused to prevent the granting of a single penny for such a cause. Every means, short only of revolution, they have declared shall be employed to prevent the execution of so stupendous a crime, and we wait with confidence the fulfilment of their pledge. The nation is behind them, and will support them in necessitating an appeal to the country before a single penny is voted or a single ship sent to the Dardanelles.—*From the Northern Echo.*

The situation was an almost exact repetition, in an accentuated form, of what had occurred when the early meeting of Parliament was announced after the fall of Plevna in December.

[1] Saturday, Jan. 26th.

The great body of Public Opinion which was favourable to a policy of Emancipation set itself to combat the fatal steps, as it deemed them, which the Government had announced. There seemed now to be a definite objective point on which the contest could turn. That point was resistance to the vote of six millions.

For a time this body of opinion, though far from being imbued with the absolute conviction of the autumn of 1876, still retained considerable traces of its belief in its own power to control the Executive Government. There was a strong impression that although the Government might command a parliamentary majority they would be loth to expose themselves to the unpopularity of persisting in their demand in the face of the impediments which resort to the forms of the House would enable the leaders of the Opposition to oppose to them, supported as the parliamentary Opposition would be in its obstruction by the storm of agitation which was rising out of doors.[1]

> I have a firm conviction that this most indiscreet proposal will be steadily and powerfully resisted within the walls of Parliament, and I hope that the country will intelligibly express its opinion on the subject.—*Mr. Gladstone*, letter in *D. N.* Jan. 28th.

> I strongly believe that in great emergencies like the present the country must fight its own battle. If the matter be simply left to the House of Commons we shall, as we may believe and trust, have a strong and honest protest made by our Liberal members against the war credit, but nevertheless the war credit will be passed at the end of four or five nights' debate. It is very far from enough that this should be done. The attempt to take the £6,000,000 is the attempt to defy and to trample on public opinion; to take the money of the people for the purpose of forcing them into a course which is hateful to them, and against which they have most earnestly protested again and again. It is an act of sheer defiance directed against the plainly expressed wishes of the country, and if it be successfully carried through, with merely the protest of an eloquent debate in the House of Commons recorded against it, a very real humiliation, the insolent victory of one man's will over the country, will have befallen us. . . . I believe it to be in the power of this country to stop this vote. It cannot be done by a debate in the House of Commons, nor by one set of meetings in the country, however enthusiastic and crowded;

[1] The newspapers towards the end of January (see especially *D. N.* 29th, 30th, and 31st) have notices of numerous meetings, some town meetings, some called by various Liberal organisations, to oppose the vote of credit.

For the most part resolutions condemning the vote were carried, but not always without opposition, and in one or two cases amendments were carried.

The *Spectator* (Feb. 2nd) notes that meetings are being held in all the boroughs to strengthen the hands and possibly the knees of the Opposition. As a rule, the towns are heartily against war and the vote of six millions.

but it can perhaps be done by the employment of every means of agitation, by an obstinate, unyielding and fierce agitation, beginning at the present hour and growing intenser from day to day, until the Government find themselves in face of a people thoroughly aroused and resolved at every cost that this step shall not be taken. I believe the people could force an appeal to themselves. Let them do it.—*Mr. Auberon Herbert*, letter in *D. N.* Jan. 30th.

Meanwhile, the Opposition leaders showed a firm front. Mr. Forster's notice of amendment, and Mr. Gladstone's speeches at Oxford,[1] pointed to a long and arduous Parliamentary contest, side by side with the contest out of doors.

These speeches were among the most important extra-parliamentary utterances of the time.

I tell you plainly that if the House of Commons is to make large votes of millions of money without a proof of the necessity of the charge your liberties are gone. (Loud cheers.) It is perfectly idle to talk about controlling a Government—and I suppose that controlling a Government is after all a necessity—it is idle to talk about controlling a Government if the House of Commons is to vote vast sums of money, which is thereupon to be in the power of that Government to spend, but the necessity of which they have never thought proper to show. (Cheers.) . . . What about this vote? Will it be carried? ("Never.") I am not quite certain. I think it quite possible. If it is, it will be carried in despite of an earnest and a strong resistance from the Liberal Party. I think you may depend upon it they will do their duty. Stand by you who may, they will stand by you. [One reason why the vote might be carried was the astonishing discipline of the Tory Party. Another, was the attitude of the Irish members.] Now, as I am a man who has no personal hopes or fears or prospects of any kind in politics, I am the man to speak on questions of this kind, and I tell you the condition of the Irish representation is, in my view, deplorable. I do not repent of measures we have passed. On the contrary, we have conferred immense blessings upon Ireland. Its social condition improves from day to day. Religious bigotry and animosity are fast dying down, and I rejoice in the altered and constantly brightening prospects of that country. . . . We were wont to march shoulder to shoulder with the popular representatives of Ireland, and to fight along with them in the cause of freedom. We are still engaged in that cause; but some change has passed over them. When we endeavoured to obtain from Parliament last year a declaration on behalf of the oppressed populations in Eastern Europe, the bulk of the popular members in Ireland voted against us. I know not what they intend to do now. I hope for a better manifestation, yet I am not without my fears.

[1] On Jan. 30th, Mr. Gladstone spoke on the occasion of the opening of the Palmerston Liberal Club, and addressed a public meeting in the evening.

I hope for the honour of Ireland that those who have been struggling to be free themselves will show respect and sympathy for the freedom of others. (Cheers.) I can't but think that that will be so; but if the worst comes to the worst, and if the popular members of Ireland will not stretch forth their hands to cure oppression a hundredfold deeper, and crimes a hundredfold blacker, than any from which their country ever suffered—(cheers)—if they are determined, having obtained freedom for themselves, to refuse it for others, why then, I say, as they refuse to fight the battles of freedom, we will fight it without them. (Loud cheers.) The people of England, Scotland, and Wales are strong enough, and will do the work depend upon it.

For the last eighteen months, as you know, we have scarcely had a day of repose on the Eastern Question. Now and then we have had a day of repose—Lord Derby has made sometimes a sensible answer to a deputation at the Foreign Office; but we have found that the next day what he said—or, still better, what Lord Carnarvon had said (cheers), for Lord Carnarvon is one of those men who suits his actions to his words (cheers)—we found, the very next day after these quieting declarations were delivered, the whole Ministerial press began to open in vituperation of those who had delivered them (cheers.) . . . The interest of the present crisis is too absorbing to attempt to draw you off to other subjects, which, I hope, we may be able to prosecute at leisure under different or happier auspices. . . . It is utterly vain to disguise, or to keep in the shade, that in regard to the Eastern Question when you speak of the Government you mean Lord Beaconsfield. . . . This is the true solution of the whole matter. It is the persistent, never-failing will, always watching the opportunity and working at the Foreign Office through a man in many respects to be greatly regarded by the country, but not of the strong purpose, not of the determined character, of Lord Beaconsfield—it is Lord Beaconsfield's will that takes effect, fitfully and with fluctuations, in the policy of the Government, and that from time to time succeeds in bringing the country into danger. That is what has been done. . . . . I will not carry you through all the details; how it was that when the Powers made a new effort and produced the Andrassy Note the Government were at length induced to sign it. I paid them a very marked compliment in Parliament upon their having signed it, and I never saw a set of blacker countenances in my life than sat ranged on the Treasury bench when I paid them that compliment. [He went on to speak of how they had explained the apparent significance of this act away, and how England's influence under it was to be exercised in a manner not unsatisfactory to the Turks.] That is the part which the great name of England has been degraded and debased to play during one of the greatest crises of modern history. (Cheers.) And when the time comes, as you have anticipated in this address, that the great deliverance, perhaps the greatest deliverance ever wrought by a single stroke in the history of Europe (loud cheers), shall have been accomplished; when

peace and law, order and security, industry and happiness, shall become known and smile on the fair surface of countries that have hitherto known nothing but lawlessness, insecurity, violence, and crime; and the question is then asked, Who are they that brought about this blessed work; who are they that Providence selected for instruments to loose the bonds of the prisoner and to let the oppressed go free? the story will be that that was not done by England; it was not by the country which has achieved freedom for herself and which values it beyond every other blessing. (Cheers.) The work was left to that State in Europe which, perhaps, was the least fit of all to do it. (Hear, hear.) . . . To my own great pain, and with infinite reluctance, but under the full and strong conviction, I may say, of my political old age, for the last eighteen months I may be said to have played the part of an agitator. . . . My purpose, I will tell you fairly, has been, with extremely inadequate means, and in a very mean and poor degree, but still to the best of my power, for the last eighteen months, day and night, week by week, month by month, to counterwork as well as I could what I believe to be the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield. (Loud cheers.) . . . By the vigorous action of public opinion which began in the autumn of 1876 we have to a great extent controlled the action of the Government. (Cheers.) But though we have controlled it, we have not got to the root of the mischief. We have by pressure from without kept down the action of the power whose influence we fear. But that power is still there. The disposition and the direction are unchanged, and the best proof that within the Cabinet it is supreme is in the vote which has just been submitted to Parliament. . . . [The supporters of the Government were unwilling to have the debate postponed.] For, said they, there has grown up in these modern times a most abominable practice of getting up meetings by wire all over the country and sending back to Parliament the resolutions of those meetings. . . . It depends at this moment on the action of the people. . . . What can be done by fair reasoning and discussion at each or every stage of this proceeding within the walls of Parliament will, I believe, be absolutely accomplished. But we are a minority. Nothing can give effect to our views but your support and the support of the country. With the country rests the power; with the country rests the responsibility of determining.—*Mr. Gladstone at Oxford*, Jan. 30th.

The words in which Mr. Gladstone spoke of his efforts to counterwork what he believed to be the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield, were treated by some as a declaration that he had no higher conception of politics than a personal rivalry.[1] They are really

[1] It is not quite worthy of Mr. Gladstone to announce himself to the world as the opponent and accuser of Lord Beaconsfield. The signs are only too apparent that his opposition has done something both to sour him and to distort his judgment

significant of the overwhelming importance, as compared with all other political controversies of the time, which was attached to that particular controversy, turning, as it had seemed at first, on the mere solution of a problem in foreign politics, but now beginning to be regarded by many as implicated with the most fundamental questions of our own constitution—the controversy in which Lord Beaconsfield was regarded as standing opposed to the will of the country.

Thus the period of the "Armed Neutrality" is marked by a contest pending in Parliament over the vote of credit; and running parallel with this, an impassioned agitation, whereby the great body of Public Opinion which had adopted the "violet" views sought to make good its claim to control the Executive.

As compared with the great agitation of September 1876, a somewhat different note is struck. Then the chief anxiety seemed to be to speak loudly enough to rouse the attention of the Government, and to convince them that the country was in earnest.

Now there was mingled a note of anger and of apprehension, such as might be excited by one who should stand cynically deaf to the entreaties or threats of those he had been wont to obey, when he begins to let them see that instead of being his master, they are in his power and at his mercy.

§ 7. *The Armistice.*

Meanwhile, the armistice had been signed, as we have seen, on January 31st.

> [This] makes a great change in the relation of this country to Turkey, and cannot fail to have a powerful effect on the debate in the House of Commons to-night. Now that Mr. Cross can no

of facts. . . . We should incline to the belief that Lord Derby, rather than Lord Beaconsfield, was the directing spirit of the Ministry.—*T.* Jan. 31st.

Lord Beaconsfield afterwards alluded to the speech at Oxford as one in which "the right hon. gentleman singled me out from the Cabinet, charged me with all the offences of the Cabinet, and described me as a dangerous, and even devilish character."—*H. of L.* July 29th.

The next night Mr. Gladstone read a letter, addressed to the Premier, in which he asked for an explanation (*H. of C.* July 30th), and a reply from Lord Beaconsfield was published in the newspapers of July 31st.

It appeared that Lord Beaconsfield, in using the epithet "devilish," had confused the Oxford speech with an incident which happened on May 8th at Hawarden (*post*, chap. xviii. § 7 *g*), when one of the speakers asked Mr. Gladstone to come forward and help to rescue the Queen, a guileless lady, in the hands of "that fearful Mephistopheles."

longer say with mimetic emphasis "the Russians are advancing" it will not be so easy to explain the uses to which the Government could put the six millions. —*T.* Feb. 4th.

It appears to have been taken for granted in this country that as the terms of peace were agreed upon between the belligerents, all further military movements would immediately be stayed; but this expectation omitted to reckon with the determination of the Russians to put themselves into a position to enforce the execution of the agreement, in case the Turks should subsequently endeavour to evade it.

Thus the preliminaries of peace and the terms of the armistice were distinct matters. The following description of the lines of Constantinople may serve to render the latter intelligible.[1]

West of Constantinople nature has designed perhaps the most splendid defensive position in the world. Two ranges of natural heights, one about twenty-five miles west of the city, the other about nine miles nearer; the outer or more distant called Buyuk (or great) Chekmedjé, the nearer, Kuchuk (or little) Chekmedjé, run nearly from sea to sea, looking toward the west. On the south the backwater of Buyuk Chekmedjé, extending about four miles inland, and the Kara Sou river running into the head of it, together with the small river of Kara-Burun on the north, still further narrow the width to be defended down to about thirteen miles of front. Swamps and low ground still further facilitate the defence. Two lines of redoubts, thrown up to occupy the crests of these natural positions, and armed with the heavy artillery of this day, would sweep the whole front, while our fleet of ironclads, divided on both flanks, and crossing their fire with the redoubts, would make approach all but impossible.—*Sir H. Havelock, Fort. Rev.* Jan. 1877.

The armistice (which was subject to a three days' notice for the resumption of hostilities) commenced at 7 P.M., on January 31st. Lines of demarcation were traced for the contending forces, leaving a neutral zone between them, at the various points of contact; armies beyond the line of demarcation were to be withdrawn within three days of the signature of the armistice. With regard to the neighbourhood of Constantinople, which was the critical point, the Russians were at liberty to advance as far as Tchataldja, a place just in front of the Great Chekmedjé lines. It appears the Turks had thrown up defensive works near the Great Chekmedjé,[2] and

[1] Besides the "lines" spoken of above, the city of Constantinople itself is inclosed by ancient walls and a ditch, which extend from the Golden Horn to the Sea of Marmora; but these cannot be regarded as fortifying it against a modern army.

[2] The Pera correspondent speaks of it as "the fortified line."—*T.* Feb. 18th.

these lines were to be evacuated by the Turks, who were to fall back upon the line of the Little Chekmedjé, withdrawing their guns.[1]

Thus the dismantled fortifications of the Great Chekmedjé were comprised in the neutral zone, but it was noted that the Russians were so close, and the Turks thrown back so far, that the recovery of this line by the Turks in the event of a renewal of hostilities had become impossible.[2]

There appears to have been nothing in the line of the Little Chekmedjé heights, or the ancient wall, to render Constantinople practically other than an open town.

> Nothing but the Turkish army, superior in point of numbers compared with the Russian vanguard, but inferior counting the Russian forces massed at Tchorlu and places adjacent, and inferior also in *morale*, stands therefore between Russia and Constantinople. —*Correspondent at Tchataldja in T.* Feb. 18th.

Meanwhile, a great mystery was made of the exact provisions of the armistice. The Turks showed a strange want of readiness to comply with its terms, and were, or feigned themselves, ignorant of what was required of them.

The *Times* correspondent with Mukhtar Pasha,[3] writing on Feb. 5th from Hademkoi,[4] notes that after that night Hademkoi would cease to be their headquarters; but adds that the general, unless he was dissembling, was uninformed on the day before as to the "limits."

Later on the same day he adds that Mukhtar Pasha having sent for explanations of the influx of Russia forces at Tchataldja, it had become known that the terms of the armistice allowed the Russians to advance so far, and required the Turkish army to fall back.

> The Russian general. . . . intimated with some sternness that he had been expecting for the last two days to hear that the line of defence had been evacuated, and that his orders were to require that this should be done without a day's delay.—*Special Correspondent in T.* Feb. 14th.

[1] See *T.* Feb. 14th, 16th, and 18th. Mr. Layard transmitted the terms of the armistice on Feb. 7th (received by Lord Derby on Feb. 8th), *Turkey*, xi. 1877, No. 2. According to Mr. Layard's version, "Fortifications are not to be retained on the neutral territory, and no new ones are to be raised there." The *Times* correspondents at Tchataldja and at Pera both stated that the Turks were prohibited from throwing up any works of defence on the inner line during the armistice.—(*T.* Feb. 18th.)

[2] Pera correspondent, *T.* Feb. 18th.

[3] Mukhtar Pasha had been summoned from Armenia to Constantinople about the end of December.

[4] See *T.* Feb. 14th. Hademkoi is a place situated between the two Chekmedjés.

It was not till February 7th, that Mr. Layard transmitted the terms of the armistice to Lord Derby.[1]

Up to the afternoon of the 5th Mr. Layard was ignorant of the terms of the armistice, and supposed the Porte to be in the same uncertainty. At 5 P.M. of that day he telegraphed to Lord Derby as follows:—

> Although the armistice has been concluded, the Russians are pushing on towards Constantinople. Notwithstanding the protest of the Turkish commander, the Turkish troops were compelled by General Strogoff to evacuate Silivria[2] last night, and the protest of the Turkish commander was refused. The Russian general declared that, according to his orders, it was absolutely necessary that he should occupy Tchataldja to-day. Although five days have elapsed since the signature of the bases of peace and of the Armistice Convention, the Porte has not yet received the Protocol, and is still in ignorance of its real terms. Great alarm is felt, and the proceedings of Russia are not understood by the Turkish Government.
>
> Representations have again been made by the Porte to the Grand Duke Nicholas, and his attention has, at the same time, been called to the fact that the Servians, having destroyed Vranja are marching on Uscub.
>
> Telegraph with Europe cut off except through Bombay.—*Layard to Derby.*[3]

The next day he telegraphed again:—

> The Russians have occupied Tchataldja in considerable force. The Russian general insisted upon the abandonment by the Turks of the Chekmedjé lines as one of the conditions of the armistice, and the Turks have been compelled altogether to retire from them, leaving Constantinople quite undefended.
>
> It is evident that, with a view of greatly improving their military position during the armistice, the Russians are consolidating their advance.—*Layard to Derby.*[4]

[1] *Ante*, p. 331 *note*.

The Pera telegram in *T.* of Feb. 18th, states that the British embassy first learnt the terms of the armistice on the 6th.

They appear to have been known much earlier in other quarters.

On Feb. 4th Colonel Mansfield telegraphed from Bucharest, "The Roumanians are occupying Widdin and Belgradzik, according to the terms of the armistice" (*Turkey* vii. 1878, No. 8), and on Feb. 8th the consul at Odessa telegraphed that the terms were made known there six days before, having been received from the Grand Duke Nicholas on the 2nd inst. and published the same evening. He did not telegraph them to Lord Derby thinking they would certainly be known at St. Petersburg, and telegraphed thence to London.—(*Turkey*, xii. 1878, No. 4.)

[2] Silivria is on the Sea of Marmora, west of the Great Chekmejdé.

[3] *Turkey*, vii. 1878, No. 10, dated Feb. 5th, 5 P.M. received Feb. 6th, 5.15 P.M.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 11, dated Feb. 6th, 1 P.M.; received Feb. 6th, 6.2 P.M.

These two messages were received by Lord Derby almost simultaneously, during the parliamentary contest over the vote of credit, and they had, as we shall see, an important influence on the result.

§ 8. *The Interval of Quasi-War.*

a. Manœuvring for Strategic Positions.—An English fleet passes the Dardanelles.—The immediate cause of a great war is often not the great mass of matters in controversy, but some fragment, so to speak, of inflammable matter, which becoming detached and exposed to ignition, explodes the whole.

During the first two months of 1878, the strategic relations of the Russians to Constantinople and the Dardanelles, had become almost completely detached from the great mass of the Eastern Question. How nearly this strategic position was the occasion of a great war is plainly apparent in the tenor of the diplomatic communications, as well as in the movements of the English fleet, counter moves, as they were, to the movements of the Russian troops.

The relations between England and Russia were strained to the last degree, and at the same time their armed forces were being pushed nearer and nearer to striking distance of each other, like pieces on a chess-board. That a blow was not actually struck—a blow which would have been the first of a gigantic conflict—seems little short of miraculous.

On December 13th, 1877, Lord Derby communicated to the Russian ambassador, a memorandum in which he intimated that the English Government were strongly of opinion

> that the occupation of Constantinople by the Russian forces, even though it should be of a temporary character and for military purposes only, would be an event which it would on all accounts be most desirable to avoid. They cannot conceal from themselves that if such an occupation appeared imminent, public feeling in this country, founded on a just appreciation of the consequences to be apprehended, might call for measures of precaution on the part of Great Britain from which they have hitherto felt justified in abstaining.—*Turkey*, III. 1878, No. 1.

In reply, the Russian Chancellor pointed out that

> [Such anticipations] if they are known at Constantinople, are precisely of a nature to render inevitable the eventualities which

[1] *Post*, chap, xviii. § 2.

> it is the object of the Principal Secretary of State of Her Britannic Majesty to guard against. If the Turks were to acquire the conviction that a menace or an attack directed against Constantinople would cause England to depart from her neutrality, their policy would naturally be to prolong their resistance, in spite of its evident uselessness, in such a way as to force Russia to pursue her operations as far as the capital. . . . An acquisition of Constantinople is not now comprised any more than before the war in the intentions of His Majesty the Emperor.—*Ibid.* No. 2.

About January 9th, the Russians captured the Shipka Pass, making prisoners of a large Turkish force who were taken in rear, thus laying open the way to Adrianople.

In a Cabinet Council of January 12th, the question of sending the fleet to the Dardanelles was discussed, but no decision was taken.[1]

Probably the despatch of the same date addressed by Lord Derby to the English ambassador at the Russian Court, embodies a compromise arrived at between conflicting elements in the English Ministry.

Lord Loftus was instructed to state that, in the opinion of the English Government, any operations tending to place the passage of the Dardanelles under the control of Russia would be an impediment to the proper consideration of the terms of the final settlement, and to ask for an assurance that no Russian force should be sent to the peninsula of Gallipoli.[2]

Lord Loftus telegraphed to Lord Derby a verbal reply, which was afterwards reduced to a formal memorandum, stating that the Russian Government had no intention of directing military operations on Gallipoli, unless Turkish regular troops should concentrate there, and that they hoped the English Government did not contemplate an occupation of Gallipoli, which would be a departure from their neutrality and would encourage the Porte to resistance.[3]

Meanwhile, Mr. Layard had telegraphed :—

> Reports have reached me that the Russians are marching a detachment of troops directly on Gallipoli.—*Layard to Derby*, Jan. 14th.[4]

The decision of the Cabinet Council held on January 15th to order the fleet to Gallipoli, and the countermanding of the order

[1] Lord Carnarvon, *H. of L.* Jan. 25th, *ante*, p. 308.
[2] Derby to Loftus, Jan. 12th, *Turkey*, iii. 1878, No. 3.
[3] Jan. 15th, *Turkey*, iii. 1878, No. 8.
[4] *Turkey*, iii. 1878, No. 5.

before it had been acted upon,[1] no doubt reflect the results of the communications from Mr. Layard and Lord Loftus respectively.

On January 21st, Lord Derby telegraphed authorising Lord Loftus to inform Prince Gortschakoff that the English Government did not under present circumstances contemplate any occupation of Gallipoli.[2]

Meanwhile, the English ambassador at Constantinople was constantly telegraphing of the Russian advance. On January 22nd, a message was received from him stating that the Governor of Gallipoli was informed that the Russians were marching on the Dardanelles.

A Cabinet Council met on the day after the receipt of this message, and it was then again decided that the fleet should be sent up. Accordingly, on the same evening,[3] orders were telegraphed to Admiral Hornby to sail at once for the Dardanelles and to proceed with the fleet to Constantinople.

The fleet sailed on the evening of the 24th, but when abreast of the Dardanelles forts, it was stopped by a telegram, annulling the former one, sent under the circumstances explained in both Houses of Parliament on January 25th.[4]

On receiving this telegram the admiral returned with the fleet to his former station in Besika Bay.

Just at this juncture Suleiman Pasha succeeded in escaping to the coast of the Ægean, with a portion of the Turkish forces, from the Russians who were closing around him.

> Half of the force, it is said, will be sent to Gallipoli, and half to Constantinople. . . . Gallipoli would have been in little danger even if it had been true that the Russians were marching straight to the peninsula. That story came from Constantinople, and it was doubtless the result partly of panic, and partly of a wish to frighten England. It is now admitted to have been unfounded. To allay apprehensions Russia has published a semi-official announcement that Gallipoli does not come within the sphere of her military operations, and that, knowing the value which this country attaches to the position, she will not attack it, unless it should be occupied by the regular Turkish army. If Suleiman's troops should be concentrated at Gallipoli, she may, however, change her intentions, as it would be impossible for her, we are told, to leave such a force on her flank. . . . But in any case the peninsula cannot be taken by surprise, and the Turks have sadly degenerated since the defence

[1] Lord Carnarvon, *H. of L.* Jan. 25th, *ante*, p. 308.
[2] *Turkey*, iii. 1878, No. 21.
[3] Wednesday, Jan. 23rd.
[4] *Ante*, p. 312.

> of Plevna if they cannot hold one of the strongest positions in Europe for weeks or even months. There is also little reason to fear for the immediate safety of Constantinople. The half of Suleiman's army will have reached the capital in a few days; there must be already 50,000 or 60,000 men ready for the defence.—*T.* Jan. 25th.

After the receipt of Mr. Layard's telegrams announcing the falling back of the Turks from the Chekmedjé lines and the advance of the Russians,[1] the Government again resolved upon a naval demonstration.

This was announced in both Houses of Parliament on February 8th. Sir Stafford Northcote

> stated, amid loud cheers from the Ministerial benches, that a detachment of the fleet, consisting of the *Alexandra*, *Téméraire*, *Swiftsure*, *Achilles*, *Ruby*, and *Salamis*, has been ordered to proceed to Constantinople, not as a menace, but for the protection of the lives and property of British subjects. Notice of this order has been given to Russia and to the other Powers of Europe, and an invitation to such as may be disposed to join in the measure.—*T.* Feb. 9th.

He added, in answer to an inquiry as to the date of the telegram to the admiral, that it was dated that day, and had just gone.

Lord Derby explained that the difference of opinion which there had been between his colleagues and himself on the former occasion did not exist with reference to the movement now ordered.

> So long as military operations continued, to me the argument seemed conclusive that to send a naval force to Constantinople was unwise and dangerous. I do not think that those objections apply now. There is no Turkish resistance to encourage, there are no military operations in which we could seem even to take a part. The great issues of the war are to be referred to European decision. The crisis is not over; far from it; and it is possible that the circumstances may yet be even more difficult and more grave than they are at present.—*Lord Derby, H. of L.* Feb. 8th.

Mr. Gladstone was probably not unwilling to echo an explanation which seemed to deprive the mission of the fleet of any significance hostile to the consummation of the measure of emancipation to which Turkey had been compelled to agree.[2] He said:—

[1] *Ante*, p. 332.

[2] Some of the Russian organs affected to regard the mission of the fleet as a step taken by England in pursuance of the "violet" policy. Thus the *Journal de St. Petersbourg* speaks of the despatch of the fleet as a measure which sixteen months before had been proposed by Russia and refused by England. The Russian Agency telegram

> Nothing could be more satisfactory than the definition of the purposes for which the fleet has gone to the Bosphorus. I do not hesitate to say that it appears to me that neither Russia nor any other independent Power can have any title or disposition to complain of that measure. I hope that the Government are certain of the assent of Turkey.—*Mr. Gladstone, H. of C.* Feb. 8th.

A firman had been obtained from the Sultan authorising the passage of the fleet through the Dardanelles when this movement had been ordered on the 23rd of January; and the English Government appear to have assumed that this firman would still be available. But the changed circumstances which Lord Derby recognised as removing his objection to the presence of the fleet at Constantinople caused the Sultan now to refuse his sanction to the proceeding; and this refusal well-nigh brought on a conflict between the Turkish batteries and the English ironclads.

Admiral Hornby, on receiving his orders, proceeded to the entrance to the Dardanelles, with the six British ships, with the view of passing through the Straits; but the Turkish authorities declared that they were not authorised to let the ships pass, and the admiral thereupon returned to Besika.[1]

> From a telegram which we publish in another column, it will be seen that the British fleet had not yet passed the Dardanelles at an early hour yesterday afternoon.—*T.* Feb. 11th.

Meanwhile it was announced that the Russian army would enter Constantinople. Reasons were assigned for this intended movement similar to those assigned for the movement of the English fleet.[2]

The pretext was seen to be a hollow one, if indeed it was not put forward in a vein of mockery. If, for a moment, opinion in England had been simple enough to regard Sir Stafford Northcote

(Paris, Feb. 10th) says the English fleet, if its purpose is to co-operate in the maintenance of order and in the equitable solution of the question, will be welcomed as an auxiliary. See telegram in *T.* Feb. 11th.

[1] See the despatch of Feb. 10th from Server Pasha, communicated to Lord Derby Feb. 12th.—*Turkey*, xiv. 1878, No. 3.

[2] Prince Gortschakoff's despatch of Feb. 10th, communicated to Lord Derby on the 11th (*Turkey*, xiv. 1878, No. 1), is to the effect that as England and other Powers had sent portions of their fleets to Constantinople for the protection of their respective subjects, Russia contemplated the entry of a portion of her troops for the protection of Christian life and property.

The St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Times*, however, stated that Count Schouvaloff was to explain that as the Great Powers had sent fleets for the protection of their interests, Russia was obliged to adopt similar measures.—*T.* Feb. 12th.

With reference to the allusion to the fleets of other Powers, it does not appear that such movements were actually contemplated, and the English fleet was the only one which in fact entered the Sea of Marmora.

as exhausting the significance of the mission of our own fleet, that mission was recognised as bearing quite a different aspect now. It was seen that the entry of our ships into the Sea of Marmora would be a strategic movement, and that the entry of the Russian troops into Constantinople was the threatened counterblast to it.

> An incident of a most momentous character has arisen in the East, which was the subject of questions in both Houses last night, and of guarded answers from Lord Derby and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Porte has refused this country the firman for which it applied to enable Admiral Hornby to conduct a portion of the British fleet peaceably to the Turkish capital. She refuses it on the ground that the appearance of the war vessels of England in the Golden Horn might induce the Russians to enter and occupy Constantinople. . . . The gravity of the crisis cannot be exaggerated, when contemplated in connection with the avowed intention of Prince Gortschakoff to give orders that a portion of the Russian army shall be marched into Constantinople. The telegraphic circular of the Prince will be found under our Latest Intelligence. The hollowness of the pretext upon which the Russian troops are to be set in motion is apparent on the face of it. It is a direct defiance of England and Europe, and if persisted in means only one thing, and can be met in only one way. . . . [If Turkey persists in keeping us out, many Englishmen will be disposed to say that we ought at once to force a passage. But we might have to force our way out of the Sea of Marmora as well as into it; and meanwhile the lines of Bulair[1] and the guns on the European side of the Dardanelles might be in the possession of Russia. . . . Russia will jump at any pretext, however frivolous, for advancing still further, and the position of the English fleet in the Sea of Marmora, with an enemy in command of one side of the Dardanelles, might be a very awkward one.] . . . We have other means of bringing both Turkey and Russia to reason, should it become plain that either, or both, are acting in a spirit hostile to our interests.—*St.* Feb. 12th.

> A portion of the British fleet will proceed to Constantinople. That is unavoidable after what has occurred. This measure was resolved upon by Ministers, and received the general support of both Houses of Parliament, in consequence of that stipulation in the armistice which placed Constantinople at the mercy of the Russians. . . . But if the British fleet, whether with or without the co-operation of other Governments, obeys these orders, the Grand Duke Nicholas, it seems, is likely to be ordered to enter the city. It is evident that, even apart from general political considerations, a state of affairs of great delicacy would thus be created. . . . This danger, indeed, would be greatly lessened if the ships of war of the other Great Powers accompanied us, since this would give some

[1] Some earthworks were thrown across the neck of the Thracian Chersonese near Bulair by the English and French engineers at the time of the Crimean War.

assurance that in any emergency Russia would be sensible that she was dealing, not with purely British, but with European interests and forces. There is some doubt, however, whether the other Powers have actually applied for firmans to authorise the passage of their fleets.

[We have plainly stated that we have interests at Constantinople and in the Straits which we must in all circumstances respect, and Russia] has no right, therefore, to see the slightest menace to herself or to her legitimate interests in a step which is the most moderate we could have adopted for the purpose of asserting our claim and of assuming a position for maintaining it. There need be no disguise that this is the real purpose with which our fleet will be sent to the Bosphorus, and Lord Derby would have done well to have avowed this fact plainly, instead of evading its responsibility by the transparent excuse of affording protection to British subjects and other persons in the event of excitement in the Turkish capital.[1]—*T.* Feb. 12th.

The English nation was compelled yesterday, and is compelled to-day, to look more closely at the prospect of war than at any moment since the fall of Sebastopol. The vision has not, we are confident, awakened either intemperate fury or groundless alarm. —*St.* Feb. 12th.

As events go on we do not find that we are drawing further away from the brink of war. On the contrary, we are drawing nearer and nearer to it.—*D. N.* Feb. 16th.

On February 13th the British ships passed through the Dardanelles, cleared for action, and with the men at quarters, ready to return the fire of the Turkish forts, which they almost expected to receive, entered the Sea of Marmora, and took up their station at Prince's Islands, some ten miles from Constantinople.[2]

The British fleet has entered the Dardanelles, and passed up within reach of Constantinople, in a character which can no longer be interpreted as specially friendly to the Turkish Government. . . . It is the Russian army which, when it enters Constantinople, will go there ostensibly as the ally of the Porte.—*St.* Feb. 15th.

[1] Compare Sir Hussey Vivian :—"The Government had sent the British fleet into the Sea of Marmora with a lie in its mouth. When was the British fleet ever sent anywhere with a lie in its mouth before? They said that they had sent it for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of British subjects, but no one would dare to state now that that was the object."—*H. of C.* May 13th.

[2] A telegram from the *Times* correspondent at Pera, dated Feb. 15th, says the ironclads *Alexandra*, *Sultan*, *Téméraire*, and *Achilles*, with two wooden ships have reached the islands. The *Devastation* is expected immediately. The *Agincourt* and *Swiftsure* remain at Gallipoli. A Constantinople telegram of the same date, transmitted from Paris, adds that the *Raleigh*, *Hotspur*, and *Ruby* are at Besika.—*T.* Feb. 16th.

Meanwhile, the announcement that the English fleet was coming, had caused no small stir at Constantinople.

> Owing to delay in the telegram it was on Feb. 9th that the Embassy learnt that the fleet was coming. On Sunday (*i.e.* Feb. 10th) the population turned out to see the fleet arrive, and Englishmen were in a ridiculous position when it was announced it had turned back. During Sunday and Monday the ambassador vainly strove to obtain the needed firman.
>
> On Tuesday, about noon, came a telegram from Lord Derby ordering the fleet to pass with or without permission. Under pressure from Russia the Porte came to the resolution to fire on the ships. It was not until nearly midnight that the strenuous exertions of the English ambassador, seconded by Said Pasha (Minister of Marine), succeeded in overcoming this resolution. The Sultan telegraphed a protest to the Czar, and received a reply that if the fleet came to the Bosphorus, the Russians would occupy Constantinople.
>
> On Wednesday a Council was held to decide whether the Russian occupation should be resisted or permitted, and it was decided that it should be permitted. The Sultan appealed to England to stay the advance of the fleet, and the telegraph was busy between the Sultan and the Czar. While the Council was sitting a message came saying a few hours would be given before ordering the advance of the troops.
>
> Meanwhile the fleet had arrived at Prince's Islands. Hence we hourly expect the advance of the Russians, though it is hoped that as only four ships have passed, and as these are still anchored ten miles off, the Russians will be content with occupying the environs.—*Constantinople Correspondent in T.* Feb. 18th.[1]

At the end of the week another Council was held at Constantinople, and another urgent request was preferred, asking that the fleet might be removed to Mundania Bay, a station considerably further from Constantinople than Prince's Islands. It was understood that if this request were acceded to, the Russians would forego their latest intention, namely, to cause General Skobeleff's troops to occupy the outskirts of the city.[2]

> This arrangement appears to have been carried into effect,[3] and the Turkish Government is relieved of a dreaded danger. . . . . The week opens with a contradiction of the most disquieting

[1] Telegram dated from Pera, Feb. 15th.

[2] Some of the English newspapers of Saturday, Feb. 16th, the day on which the Council was held at Constantinople, erroneously announced that the threatened occupation of the suburbs had actually taken place. See *D. N.* Feb. 18th.

[3] The *Times* correspondent at Pera, telegraphing on Feb. 17th, says that on that day the fleet took up a position at Mundania, at about the same distance from Constantinople as the Russian forces, by order of Mr. Layard, at the special request of the Sultan.—*T.* Feb. 19th. The withdrawal to Mundania Bay seems to have been temporary, for subsequently we again hear of the ships at Prince's Islands.

news with which its predecessor closed. In the present critical condition of affairs in the East it is much if one day is found to be not worse than its predecessor. We are in a situation in which a slight false move, or even a misunderstood word, might precipitate a great war. It is not the time now to ask by whose fault this has happened. We must accept the fact, and be thankful if the worst possibilities of a dangerous position are not realised.—*D. N.* Feb. 18th.

Meanwhile Lord Derby had inquired whether it was intended by the Russian Government that the entry of their troops into Constantinople was to be for the protection of the Christians whom they considered in danger, or whether it was a point of military honour that if England and other nations showed their flags at Constantinople that of Russia should also be displayed there. He received a reply to the effect that the Russians had in view exactly the same object as that assigned for the despatch of the English ships—"with the distinction that our protection, if required, will be extended to all the Christians"—so that the two Governments would be fulfilling a common duty of humanity, a task which could not assume a character of mutual hostility.

Lord Derby rejoined that the circumstances of the two proceedings were widely different, and insisted that the despatch of the English ships of war had no bearing on the entry of the Russian troops—a measure uncalled for, and the consequences of which might be most disastrous to the whole population of the city.[1]

Quite apart from the question of any permanent settlement of the question, the power of keeping open the passage of the Dardanelles for the time being had become vital to the safety of the English ironclads which had entered the Sea of Marmora. Should the passage be closed, by batteries upon the shore, or torpedoes in the channel, the English ships would be caught as in a trap. Anxiety on this score became an element in the situation. The suggestion of any Russian movement in the direction of Gallipoli, regarded with jealousy before, had now become intolerable.

Meanwhile the English fleet was behaving almost as if it were in the presence of a declared enemy.

[Admiral Commerell's division is making it very difficult, if not impossible, for the Russians to advance and close the Dardanelles, or even to take possession of the lines of Bulair. The Admiral has placed on both sides of the promontory ships the guns of

[1] See *Turkey*, 1878, xiv. Nos. 2, 5, and 6.

which can rake it from shore to shore, and he also has guard boats out every night to prevent the laying down of torpedoes.]—*Constantinople Correspondent in T.* Feb. 25th.

In a conversation with the Russian ambassador on February 13th Lord Derby took occasion to express an earnest hope, that the Russian Government would not make any movement of troops towards Gallipoli, or of such a nature as to threaten the communications of the English fleet. Any such movement, he said, would be regarded in England as compromising the safety of the fleet, and in the actual state of public feeling he could not answer for the consequences, which might be most serious.[1]

It would be difficult in diplomatic language to express a more decided protest against a menacing advance by the Russian forces on Gallipoli, and we cannot deem it possible that the Russian Government will be so reckless as to incur the risk which Lord Derby indicates. It is obvious, indeed, that by sending our ships to the Bosphorus we have given to Gallipoli a far more direct importance in our interests than it possessed before.—*T.* Feb. 16th.

A further exchange of telegrams between the English and the Russian Foreign Offices from Feb. 18th to Feb. 21st.[2] resulted in engagements on the one side that Russia should not occupy Gallipoli nor enter the lines of Bulair nor occupy the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles; and on the other side that England should not land troops on either the European or Asiatic bank of the Straits.

Thus the collision which had seemed so imminent was averted, but the close proximity of quasi-hostile forces long remained a source of danger.

b. The Russian advance to San Stefano.—Although the Russians did not give effect to their threat of entering Constantinople, they did advance their forces beyond the limits which had been assigned to them by the armistice. The headquarters of the Grand Duke Nicholas were pushed on to San Stefano, a village on the Sea of Marmora, and inside the line of the Little Chekmedjé, while the Turkish forces under Mukhtar Pasha retired from the Little Chekmedjé.

[The Russians are positively coming to San Stefano—as friends; not exactly on the invitation of the Sultan, but with his

[1] *Turkey*, xiv. 1878, No. 7. This and other despatches of the same series were published in the London papers of Feb. 16th.

[2] See *Turkey*, xvii. 1878.

consent. This advance gives them no real military advantage. If they do not enter Constantinople the English Government will have scored one point by sending the fleet to be on the spot, representing British influence, without having caused any real change in the Russian military position.]—*Constantinople Correspondent in T.* Feb. 25th.[1]

This movement took place on February 23rd and 24th. The entry of the English ships served as a pretext for it; but the Russian advance appears rather to have been made in view of the disposition which the Turks were showing to interpose delays and obstacles to the completion of the terms of their surrender; a disposition which was doubtless encouraged by the arrival of the English ships, and the hope that even yet the contest might be renewed with English aid.[2]

This disposition was shown with regard to the movement in question itself. The evacuation by the Turks of the positions which the Russians were about to occupy appears to have been agreed to, but at the last moment the Turkish commanders set up a "*Non possumus.*" If this attitude had been persisted in, it would, it seems, have resulted in an assault upon the Turkish positions the next morning. A correspondent of the *Daily News* gives a graphic account of the interview between the Grand Duke Nicholas and Tahir Bey at Tchataldja on the evening of February 24th, when Tahir announced that Mukhtar Pasha had no orders to withdraw his troops from Kuchuk Chekmedjé.

The Grand Duke in reply delivered an angry message:—

"Go, and tell Mukhtar Pasha that when I give an order he must obey it, and at once, or it will be the worse for him. Go."

There was a dead silence for a moment. Everybody felt the gravity of the situation. Tahir withdrew precipitately, sprang upon a locomotive, and in a moment was flying through the darkness over the line to Kujuk Chekmejeh as fast as steam could carry him. It was now known by all the officers present, that unless the Turks abandoned the positions instantly they would be attacked at daylight.

Finally, after two hours, news came that the positions were being evacuated by Mukhtar and that the Russians were marching in. At midnight the train was again in motion, and at two o'clock on Sunday morning the Grand Duke was in San Stefano. The line Kujuk Chekmejeh was abandoned completely by Mukhtar, who is now behind the little creek that empties itself into the Marmora, half way between San Stefano and Jedi Kuleh. —*D. N. War Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 572.

[1] Telegram dated from Pera, Feb. 22nd.

[2] Compare *post*, chap. xviii. § 5 *a*, "The Fall of Server.

c. Beati Possidentes.—On February 19th Prince Bismarck expounded his policy in relation to the Eastern Question in the German Parliament. In the course of his speech he intimated an opinion that if Russia should not now succeed in obtaining the consent of the other signatories of the treaties of 1856, to the alterations which she considered necessary, she would probably content herself with the reflection—"*Beati possidentes.*"[1]

Similarly, from one point of view, the movement of the English fleet was regarded as having secured a certain power of controlling in the last resort the entrance and exit to the Sea of Marmora, the approach from the Mediterranean to Constantinople, and a position from which it would be possible to place the English forces on the scene of action if the possession of Constantinople should prove to be in question.

> The British fleet is practically in occupation of the waterway to Constantinople; and, this being the case, we may watch with comparative calmness the course which the Russians, or which other European Governments, may adopt. The unfortunate and ill-advised attempt to minimise the significance of this proceeding on our part will neither prevent its being apprehended by Europe nor diminish in any way its essential importance. . . . There are very few persons indeed in this country who, now that our fleet is near Constantinople, would deem that its duty is confined to the protection of British subjects in Constantinople. That, no doubt, is one of its duties. But a more obvious and probably more urgent part of its duty is to make it plain that no arrangement respecting the possession of Constantinople or the control of the Bosphorus or of the Dardanelles will have the slightest validity unless the claims of this country be fairly consulted. . . . We will frankly admit that Prince Gortschakoff takes an advantage of Lord Derby's former words which, if not prudent in point of statesmanship, is fair in point of argument. If, in point of fact, our only object were to protect British subjects, the Russians have a right to be on the spot to protect Greek Christians. But the plain truth is that this is not the question at issue. The question is that of obtaining a predominant position in Constantinople and in the Straits, as a preliminary to entering into conference with the European Powers. For our part, we do not pretend for a moment to such a position. We do not pretend to any rights in the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus which we do not also claim for the other maritime Powers of Europe. We content ourselves, therefore, with stationing our fleet where we are sure of having a

[1] See two long telegrams from Berlin giving summaries of the speech, *T.* Feb. 20th. It was in this same speech that Prince Bismarck disclaimed any ambition on the part of Germany to act as arbiter in the pending contest. Let hers be the modest task of a broker to settle a bargain.

> negative voice in this matter. But for Russia to occupy Constantinople would be an entirely different step. It would be to assume the position which Turkey now occupies and to lay a Russian hand upon the key of the Black Sea. Russia may rest assured that whether she sends a large or a small number of troops into that city it will make no difference to the final determination of this country, and, doubtless, of Austria also, that their presence there shall be in every respect temporary.—*T.* Feb. 15th.

Granting the purely strategic assumptions involved to be sound, the question whether it was politic or otherwise to adopt the course of sending the fleet to occupy a position of strategic advantage would depend upon the further question whether the military advantages of the Russians which it was sought thus to countervail were indeed intended to be used, at all hazards and irrespective of the declared objects of the war, to acquire such concessions for Russia as England could not tolerate.

So far as Russia was now in a position to grasp at advantages for herself which would be inimical to England, this state of things had been brought about (so those who had been in favour of the "violet" policy held), by the refusal of England to concur in extorting a sufficient measure of emancipation from the Porte.

The objections which most of these persons entertained with respect to the despatch of the fleet at this juncture were, broadly speaking, founded on the following considerations. Russia, as yet, had not betrayed any determination to push her military advantages further than was necessary for the declared objects of the war. Furthermore, should Russia now be inclined to seek an opportunity to take advantage for ulterior purposes of the tempting positions which her armies occupied, such a danger even at this late hour would best be obviated by a course on the part of the English Government such as should lead the Turks to give speedy effect to the terms of their surrender. When this should be done, the Russians would be deprived of all plausible pretext for further demands. In view not only of the Russian protestations, but of the resistance which would be provoked, it was not believed that such demands would be made. For a moment indeed, on the receipt of Mr. Layard's two telegrams it might have been supposed that the Russians, carried away by the lust of conquest, were rushing to lay violent hands upon Constantinople, but further information had put a very different complexion upon the advance to Tchataldja. If hereafter inadmissible demands should be persisted in, they could be met as the occasion might require.

d. Popular belief that the English Fleet had saved Constantinople. —On the other hand it was claimed that the action of the English Government in ordering up the fleet in the nick of time had saved Constantinople from falling into the hands of the Russians. This indeed subsequently became one of the stock arguments advanced on behalf of the Government, and Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry acquired a factitious support by the skilful use of the *ad captandum* cry that they had saved Constantinople from the Russians, a cry which appears to have exercised no little influence on Public Opinion.

The broad facts, that on the approach of the Russian army to Constantinople the English fleet had been ordered thither too and that the Russian army halted outside the city, were calculated to impress the popular imagination. It was flattering to the national pride to picture Constantinople lying under the English guns, and the Russian columns suddenly arrested by the dread of encountering their fire. This was the form vaguely assumed by the sort of myth which arose about the saving of Constantinople.

It was forgotten that if Constantinople would have been at the mercy of the Russian army but for the presence of the English fleet, Constantinople lay at the mercy of the Russian army a full week before the English fleet came up. It was forgotten how nearly the despatch of the fleet provoked just that entry of the Russian troops into Constantinople, which it was given the credit of having averted. It was forgotten that the Russians were induced to forego their entry by the halting of the English ships at Prince's Islands or their removal to Mundania Bay, and the understanding that no English forces should be landed.

e. Dangerous proximity of quasi-hostile forces. The signature of the preliminaries, and even of the Treaty of San Stefano, did not prevent the character of the interval until the definite settlement at Berlin from approximating closely to that of actual war.

The Turks seemed sullenly bent on interposing every possible obstacle to the evacuation of their fortresses, and the fulfilment of the other terms of their surrender.

The Russian army remained in its positions near Constantinople and upon the Sea of Marmora, while the proximity of the English, Russian, and Turkish forces long remained a source of danger. The quasi-hostile forces had got into a position whence extrication was difficult. Each side acted as if neither could venture to

make or to allow any movement of which the other might possibly take advantage.

I learn on good authority that the Russian proposal to embark the Imperial Guard at Buyukdere has been abandoned, because Mr. Layard threatened to bring the British fleet to Constantinople if the Russians came to the Upper Bosphorus. . . . The Russians protest that they only desire to return home as quickly as possible, and all they are doing is consistent with this statement; but it is equally consistent with the idea that they are preparing for war. —*Special Correspondent, St.* March 23rd.

Everything is stopped since the Buyukdere affair which turns out to be a very bad business. At the time when General Gourko and the Guard were starting for Russia, General Skobeleff was under orders to go to Philippopolis with the 4th Corps. This movement is likewise stopped. The Russians are now waiting to see what will happen. They cannot, of course withdraw their army with the war cloud gathering thicker and thicker over their heads. All this is the result of the mischievous interference in the Buyukdere affair. There are people here whom I cannot name in a telegram, who are doing their best to precipitate an explosion. They will hesitate at nothing to accomplish their purpose. Lies of the most impudent character and of the basest kind are invented. These are the same people who telegraphed to England that the Russians were marching on Constantinople in violation of the armistice, who for days afterwards went on telegraphing that the Russians were coming long after they had halted, and who finally succeeded in bringing the English fleet to Prince's Islands and the Russian army to San Stefano. They have prevented the departure of the Russian army. They will bring about war if it be possible.—*Special Correspondent, D. N.* March 26th.

The *Times* refers to negotiations which Prince Bismarck had set on foot, and of proposals for the simultaneous withdrawal of the British and Russian forces from the neighbourhood of Constantinople. These are being minutely discussed, but no definite scheme for the purpose seems as yet to have obtained any acceptance.—(April 27th.)

[The general feeling of suspense, also the negotiations for the withdrawal of the naval forces at Constantinople] are intimately connected with the similar question of the evacuation by the Turks of the great fortresses still remaining in their hands, and of the withdrawal of the Russians from the region which, by the Treaty of San Stefano itself, will remain Turkish territory. . . . We believe the plain truth is that the Turks are unwilling to give full effect to the surrender to which they consented in the Treaty of San Stefano until they see how far that treaty will be ultimately sustained in a European Congress. . . . It is impossible to feel free from that danger as long as Russian, Turkish, and English forces are in such close contiguity.—*T.* May 12th.

The very rumour of autonomous states makes those persons who profit by the present misgovernment anxious to bring about war. The Turks want peace. The pashas' last hope is in war where England would be on the side of Turkey. Hence the great danger at the present moment is that a collision may be brought about between the two armies which are facing each other outside Constantinople.—*Constantinople Correspondent, D. N.* June 10th.

Meanwhile more good humour appears to have been shown by the quasi-hostile forces thus brought into close proximity than might perhaps have been looked for.[1]

The vicinity of the Russian army does not appear to have in the slightest degree disturbed the ordinary tranquillity of the population of Stamboul or Pera. The day of their arrival being Sunday, a holiday here, and the weather unusually fine, the streets presented a gayer and more holiday aspect than usual, and a few sightseers rode or drove out to try to get sight of the Russians. There has been a daily increasing crowd going out to trade and try to make money out of them—in fact, the only unpleasant fact which the vicinity of the army appears to have produced is the marked rise in the price of provisions.—*Constantinople Correspondent, T.* Feb. 27th.

It has been reported that a fight had occurred between some English sailors who went to San Stefano and some Russian soldiers. The fact is, seven English sailors got leave to go ashore at Constantinople and surreptitiously took the train and went to San Stefano. Here they fell in with some Russian soldiers. All went together to a drinking place kept by an Armenian, a wooden shanty hastily built since the arrival of the army. The English having plenty of money treated the Russians many times. They drank each other's healths, including that of the Queen and the Czar, oftener than strict etiquette required. They maintained that the Armenian tried to cheat them, which is probable enough. Whereupon the representatives of the English fleet and Russian army there present joined forces in the most friendly manner, and proceeded to tear the Armenian's shanty down. They were carrying out this laudable design in a most vigorous manner, when some Turkish zaptiehs, whom the Armenian called in, interfered, and persuaded them to desist.—*Special Correspondent, D. N.* April 6th.

Up to the present time the conduct both of Turkish and of Russian soldiers has been exemplary, and gives every promise that a collision will be avoided.—*Constantinople Correspondent, D. N.* June 10th.

[1] A visit of a dragoman of the English embassy to San Stefano, where he encountered General Ignatieff, who greatly alarmed him by telling him he would have him shot, was disposed of by the *Standard* correspondent (March 4th) as "an amusing incident which may probably be reported wrongly. . . . Only one of General Ignatieff's many bad jokes;" while the *Telegraph* of the same day treats it as a serious insult.

At the first sitting of the Congress of Berlin [1] Lord Beaconsfield referred to the position occupied by the Russian forces in the neighbourhood of Constantinople as a question of extreme urgency, pointing out that they had advanced beyond the line fixed by the armistice. He looked upon their presence as a danger, fearing the impulses to which two armies brought so close might be exposed.

Count Schouvaloff said the forward movement took place in consequence of the entry of the English fleet into the Bosphorus. The actual state of things had given rise during the last three months to no serious collision, and the retreat of the army might be the signal for grave disorders.

The president, Prince Bismarck, urged that the preliminary objection should not be insisted on as a hindrance to the deliberations of the Congress, and suggested that it might be the subject of direct discussion between the English and Russian representatives, and, Lord Beaconsfield agreeing, Prince Bismarck declared that the incident was terminated.[2]

Even after the conclusion of the Berlin Treaty the English fleet and the Russian army were only withdrawn *pari passu*. The withdrawal of the Russian army appears to have commenced in August; it was the end of September before the fleet finally departed from Prince's Islands.[3]

f. Continuance of confused fighting.—The interval which followed the acceptance of the preliminaries of peace, and the treaty of San Stefano, was one of much confused fighting in various quarters, in addition to the tension incident to the close proximity of the English, Russian, and Turkish forces.

g. Hellenism.—The subject Greeks were eager to be freed from the rule of the Porte now that the emancipation of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Bulgaria seemed to be secured, turning, however, it seems, rather to the alternative of union with the kingdom of Greece, than to that of practical independence under a nominal Turkish suzerainty. The ambition of the free Greeks of the kingdom doubtless overstepped the limits which would be traced by the doctrine of nationality, but it seems the Greeks of the subject provinces were fully in sympathy with their aspirations.

> Hellenism is the policy of liberating and uniting with the present kingdom of Greece the peoples and territory of Turkey in

[1] *Post*, chap, xviii. § 10.
[2] *Turkey*, xxxix. 1878, No. 6, inclosure protocol 1, p. 11.
[3] *Turkey*, liii. 1878, Nos. 22, 29, 63, and 206. Some further references to the movements of the fleet occur in *Turkey*, liv. 1878.

Europe situated south of the Balkans and the River Scumbi in Albania, and along the coast of the Black Sea from Cape Emineh to the mouths of the Danube. . . .

The Greeks of to-day speak of Thrace and Macedonia as their rightful inheritance, and those provinces were Greek only under the Eastern Empire. Constantinople, not Athens, is the central point in their aspirations. They are ready to include Albanians, Turks, Bulgars, and Slavs within the Panhellenic State, a proceeding which would have been in direct opposition to the exclusive nationalism of the true Hellenes.

Hellenism is not merely a scheme of politicians and a dream of scholars; it is, as it were, an instinct or inspiration in the soul of every living Greek. Meet them where you will, rayahs and freemen, statesmen, peasants, professors, and merchants all alike speak of the position of their race as of a personal grief. . . .

The Greeks consider that in the Balkan peninsula Hellenism is the natural and most powerful opponent of Panslavism. That it is an opponent cannot be doubted. The northern parts of Macedonia and Thrace are claimed by both Greeks and Slavs—by the Greeks as theirs by inheritance, by the Slavs as theirs by occupation. But it is not only that the rival races dispute over a few hundred or a few thousand square miles of territory. The Greeks believe that their very existence as a nation is at stake; they believe that if once the Slav power sets foot on this side of the Balkan range, the sea alone will stop their southward march, and that Greece in a generation or two will cease to be Hellenic.

Regarding Hellenism as the proper opponent of Panslavism, it is not unnatural that the Hellenes should look to England for support. They do so, and they sincerely pity England for being so blind or so obstinate as not to see or not to follow her own interest in the matter and sincerely espouse their cause. . . .

A few days ago a lady related to me the following parable:—"A little boy was in his father's orchard gazing at some beautiful apples which hung upon a tree. A strong man stood beside him. Presently the boy made preparations for climbing the tree and gathering the apples. 'If you climb that tree, you'll break your neck,' growled the man. 'Then help me to get them,' said the boy. 'I'll do nothing of the kind,' answered the man, 'and if you persist in trying to pick them, I cannot undertake to say that I shall not box your ears.' Do you consider," continued the authoress of the allegory, "that the conduct of the man was noble?" It is, perhaps, superfluous to explain that the orchard represented Hellas, the apples Thessaly, Epirus, Crete, &c., the boy Greece, the man England, or the English Government.—*Times Correspondent at Athens* in *T.* Feb. 1st.[1]

The occupation of the Turkish armies in the great contest with Russia seemed to afford an opportunity, if not of successful

[1] See *post*, chap. xviii. § 5 *c*, as to the attitude of the English Government towards Greece.

insurrections, still of such risings as would demonstrate to Europe that in the Greek provinces too there was a question to be dealt with, and the Greeks, alike of the kingdom and the provinces, were eager to force the question on.

h. Insurrections in Thessaly and Crete.—In the spring of 1878 insurrections took place in Thessaly and Epirus; perhaps it should rather be said that a smouldering insurrection assumed larger proportions. Early in the year armed bands crossed the Greek frontier, and it seemed that Greece was on the point of openly coming to the aid of the insurgents.[1] Actual war, however, between Greece and Turkey was averted by the efforts of diplomacy.[2]

An insurrection broke out in Crete in February, and desultory fighting was renewed from time to time.[3]

i. The Rhodope Insurrection.—On the other hand, a guerilla warfare was carried on against the Russians by some of the Mahometan inhabitants of the districts which had been occupied by the invading army. The Rhodope mountains, where considerable numbers of the Mahometans fleeing in front of the Russian advance, or from the Bulgarians, took refuge,[4] became the focus of this movement, which was spoken of as the "Rhodope Insurrection."

It is significant of the anomalous nature of the Turkish Power in Europe that the formal signature of peace by the Sultan did not of itself suffice to cause all the subjects of the Empire to cease from the attempt to resist by arms the consummation of the state of things which had been formally agreed to by the central authority. This authority was at the same time perhaps not unwilling that its formal agreement should be nullified by the acts of its subjects.[5]

[1] See *Turkey*, xix. and xxxii. 1878.

[2] *Post*, chap. xviii. § 5 *c*.

[3] *Turkey*, xxviii. and xxxv. 1878.

[4] *Ante*, p. 240, and compare *Turkey*, liv. 1878, No. 71.

[5] Compare the instances of local resistance to the execution of the terms of the Treaty of Berlin.

The occupation of Bosnia by the Austrian troops was not effected without severe fighting, and the addition to the territory of Montenegro was resisted by the Albanians, and this resistance was used as a pretext for delay by the Porte.

See also the address "To Lord Beaconsfield, the Marquis of Salisbury, both Houses of Parliament, and the Lord Mayor," from the Laz tribes of the Batoum district, threatening to resist the Russian occupation of their territory, and to hoist the English flag; to which Lord Salisbury instructed the vice-consul to reply that England could sanction no such proceedings.—(*Turkey*, liii. 1878, Nos. 70 and 93.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DICTATORSHIP.

§ 1. *The Government acquires an Ascendency, as in Time of War.*

THE order given to the fleet to proceed to the Sea of Marmora was nothing short of a strategic movement intended to countervail the strategic advantage which the position of the Russians would give them in the event of any ulterior disagreement relating to the possession of Constantinople or the control of the Straits.

Thus it became apparent to the English public that in the opinion of the English Government the situation was such that the actual taking up of a position of strategic advantage by our armed forces had become necessary for the proper protection of vital interests. To occupy with armed force a strategic position is but one remove from the threat of opening fire if a specific demand is not complied with, and this again but one remove from actual conflict.

Thus independently of the broader political issues involved in the impending resettlement of Eastern Europe, this country had been brought within two removes of war.

In fact, at this juncture, the attitude of Public Opinion in regard to the action of the Government approximated very closely in its character to a period of actual war.

When a Government is moving fleets and armies, or is in the crisis of a dangerous negotiation, it is too late for Public Opinion to be considering to what objects the diplomacy of the country should be directed.

In war time, Public Opinion tends to become simple and impatient of any criticisms which might afford aid or comfort to the enemy. The greatness of the struggle, and the fact that the nation is committed to it, dwarf all controversies as to the merits

of the policy by which such a result has been brought about. Domestic opposition to a Government engaged in war with a public enemy seems to savour of treason. A few feeble voices may perhaps be contemptuously suffered, but louder adverse criticisms are apt to arouse angry and dangerous passions. Thus adverse critics (unless indeed they can overthrow the Government) must perforce hold their peace. At such a time a Government acquires an immense ascendency and accession of authority at home.

It was just such an ascendency which the Beaconsfield Cabinet acquired in February 1878. This was the practical commentary on the theory of the constitution which had been so rife in the autumn of 1876; the theory that no matter what Parliament was sitting, or what Ministry was in power, Public Opinion would always find a way to make its will effective.

Only a year and a-half before it had been an accepted commonplace that, at least in our day, no Minister would dare to involve the country in war against the will of the people. Only a few days before the *Times* had been dwelling on the unanimity with which men of all parties agreed in repudiating a war policy. And now at a stroke the Cabinet became as it were autocratic, and for months the country was kept in suspense, men watching the indications day by day with terrible anxiety, now rejoicing in "a bit of blue," now again making up their minds that this time the bolt *must* fall; but watching rather as men watch a tempest, than as men who have any hope of influencing the result.

§ 2. *Breakdown of Resistance in Parliament.*

No sooner had the two telegrams been received from Mr. Layard[1] saying how the Russian advance continued notwithstanding the armistice, than it began to be noised abroad that something serious had happened.

Rumours were rife in London on the Wednesday evening[2] and on the Thursday that Constantinople and Gallipoli had been occupied by the Russian troops.[3]

When Parliament assembled on the Thursday afternoon, the substance of Mr. Layard's telegrams was stated in nearly identical terms by Lord Derby and by Sir Stafford Northcote in reply to questions

[1] *Ante*, p. 332. [2] Feb. 6th.

[3] See the questions put by Lord Granville, *H. of L.*, and Lord Hartington, *H. of C.* Feb. 7th.

in both Houses. Their tone was the tone of men who, while they acknowledged that the facts *might* be capable of a favourable explanation, nevertheless regarded this as a highly improbable contingency.

> I wish to put the case quite fairly, and will therefore add that it may be said that the various steps which I have related are not in contravention but in pursuance of the armistice. That may be so, because we do not know what conditions there may be in the armistice of which we are not aware. But it would appear that the Porte is equally in ignorance, and is perplexed as to the meaning of these movements.—*Lord Derby, H. of L.* Feb. 7th.

The news created a profound impression, amounting to something very much like a panic. Many believed that the Russians were about to take the opportunity of seizing Constantinople quite regardless of everything but the physical possibility which the moment afforded of laying their hands upon it. It was recognised by many others that, for the moment, argumentative opposition to measures which would now be represented as measures of precaution against a faithless and unprovoked aggression, would tend to provoke feelings inimical to the ultimate preservation of peace.[1]

In the House of Commons, Mr. Forster said that the aspect of affairs was changed by the information now given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that he wished to withdraw his amendment.

The Government were inclined to insist on Mr. Forster's withdrawing his amendment unconditionally, and on proceeding with the vote of supply at once, or else on forcing a division and voting the amendment down. The Opposition were anxious that time should be gained for calmer feelings to prevail, and urged that after the Speaker had left the chair the vote should not be proceeded with in Committee of Supply that might.

> *Sir Stafford Northcote*:—Now, I see no reason why we should act upon that suggestion. . . . [The Marquis of Hartington and Mr. Forster] in consequence of certain intelligence which we received to-day and which is of a character more or less serious, but not at all different from that which was anticipated when the vote was originally proposed, think it right to withdraw the amendment. I cannot see any other motive for the adoption of the course than that they wish to facilitate the progress of public business and not to delay the passing of the vote. In these circumstances, we should, it seems to me, be stultifying ourselves if we assented to the adjournment of the debate.

[1] Compare Mr. Forster's speech at the dinner of the Cobden Club, July 20th, 1878, *post*, § 13.

The Marquis of Hartington:—I have a strong opinion that, in the circumstances and after what has occurred, a division upon the amendment cannot possibly be any indication of the real state of opinion in the House or in the country upon the question, and that it would be for the convenience of both parties that that division should not be taken. . . . Our course in the event of the House not permitting it to be withdrawn will be a clear one to myself and to the greater part of us. If the House tries to force us to vote on the question which we wish to withdraw, we shall instead of withdrawing the amendment, withdraw ourselves.

Mr. Bright [asked had the Government really any positive information which made them believe that whatever has occurred has not occurred by connivance with the Porte? The circumstances led him to the conclusion that it was a matter of arrangement between the two Powers, not an act of war on the part of Russia.] . . . If there were a Parliament in St. Petersburg and a House of Commons there, and if speeches were made with regard to England such as have been made in this House with regard to Russia, then I venture to think it would not be in the power of gentlemen opposite, even if they were so disposed, or of gentlemen on these benches, to prevent the occurrence of that frightful calamity of hostilities between this country and Russia. . . . . [Looking at this state of feeling, he thought the true interests of the country and the dignity of Parliament would be promoted by a cessation of a discussion of this nature at a time when facts of great importance are just trembling, as it were, in the balance, and when we are unable to know what is the exact position of the matter which is under discussion.]—*H. of C.* Feb 7th.

A somewhat confused wrangle followed as to the course which proceedings should take. It had been expected that the debate over Mr. Forster's amendment would last over the Thursday and Friday, and that the Government would not be able to approach the direct proposal of their vote in Committee until Monday the 11th.[1]

At this juncture Sir Stafford Northcote read a communication from the Russian ambassador which had just been handed him by Lord Derby. The ambassador had addressed an inquiry to his Government, and had received the following reply dated St. Petersburg, February 7th :—

> The order has been given to our military commanders to stop hostilities along the whole line in Europe and in Asia. There is not a word of truth in the rumours which have reached you.[2]

[1] See Mr. Dodson's speech, *H. of C.* Feb. 7th.

[2] Lord Derby, after communicating Prince Gortschakoff's reply to the House of Lords, commented on it as follows :—"What those rumours are is not stated Literally the contradiction may only apply to the capture of some fortified position.

Sir Stafford Northcote continued :—I must express to the House my regret that the issue is not of so dramatic a character as they had been led to suppose, but what has occurred is not our fault. It has been throughout this difficulty our anxiety to deal most frankly. I can only say what I said just now, that as far as the Government are concerned their view of the necessity of the vote they propose, whether the rumours are true or not true, remains precisely the same.

Mr. Fawcett asked whether on this Mr. Forster still desired to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. Forster :—Certainly we are in rather a curious position. It seems to me the best course that could be now taken would be to let the debate proceed, if it is to proceed, upon the actual proposal of the Government and not upon my amendment.

Mr. Gladstone said he was one of those who knew, before the House met, and agreed with, Mr. Forster's intention under the great alteration of circumstances which he supposed had occurred. . . . Mr. Layard's message fills me with an astonishment and a dismay that I cannot adequately describe. . . . If he is not right, he is tremendously wrong ; but if he is right, then the position and attitude in which the House approached this question has immensely changed. . . . If the information is true, then we are equally astonished and equally dismayed with respect to the telegram that has just been read ; and surely, in that position, it would be a wrong, I might even say a rather violent, exercise of the power of a majority, to drive us to proceed with the discussion of the proposal of the Government.

After a while Mr. Forster's amendment was formally withdrawn, and the debate was resumed on the motion that the Speaker do leave the chair.

Mr. Anderson thought it was quite evident the order had gone forth to hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House not to prolong the debate.

Mr. Newdegate said they were now going to vote "Ways and Means" before "Supply." The forms of Parliament had substance in them, as had often been proved in critical times. These forms constituted the real power of the House to be the guardian of the safety, economy, and peace of the country.

Mr. Walter characterised the proceedings as "A war debate tempered by telegrams."

Sir Stafford Northcote :—I would again repeat my earnest entreaty that the House would allow us to go into Committee and to take this vote to-night.

and therefore it does not, I think, contradict the statement from Mr. Layard, but undoubtedly it does to a considerable extent modify what, from that statement, would appear to be the situation."—*H. of L.* Feb. 7th.

The Marquis of Hartington:—Unfortunately the Chancellor of the Exchequer asks us practically to take two steps—namely, that the Speaker should leave the chair, and that the vote should be taken. . . . I trust the Government will not think it necessary to press the taking of the vote in Committee to-night, because I think they would hardly be able to obtain the assent of the House to such a proceeding.

Sir Stafford Northcote finally consented to adjourn the vote till to-morrow on the understanding that no discussion would be taken upon it before they went into Committee.—*H. of C.* Feb. 7th.

A division was taken on the motion that the Speaker leave the chair, with the result that 295 members voted aye, and 96 against the motion, thus giving the Government a majority of 199.

This has been the first real discussion of the Ministerial policy since the debate on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions. The mutilation of those celebrated proposals lessened the reality of the former debate, and the position of Turkey, England, and Europe has undergone an immense change during the intervening time. . . . It would have been better to avoid any division on the motion that the Speaker should leave the chair. As it is, many of the Liberals abstained from voting after the withdrawal of Mr. Forster's amendment, and the ninety-six who did go into the lobby represent merely the "Irreconcilables." . . . . Such a discussion as that of last night might easily become purely mischievous if it were to display many specimens of a spirit which, unhappily, has not been absent from either side. Mr. Bright spoke of the danger that violent harangues might inflame the feelings both of Russia and England to a dangerous pitch of excitement. That peril is but too grave. Some of the harangues have shown so little sense of responsibility that they seem like the waving of torches in a powder magazine. . . . But in a time like the present the mere existence of a suspicion that Russia may be regardless of any but her own interests is a real danger, and the best method of allaying it is to take such precautions as may promise to satisfy the public mind. Since the Government says that the six millions are needed, and since the country is evidently of the same mind, it is good policy for the Liberals to stand aside, if for no other purpose than to spread a feeling of security. . . . Russia is profoundly distrusted, and not without reason. She is profoundly disliked, and not without reason also. She is in a position tempting to adventurous soldiers. All these facts explain, and partially warrant, the widespread feeling of alarm.—*T.* Feb. 8th.

On the next night[1] Lord Derby and Sir Stafford Northcote, in their respective Houses, announced that a detachment of the

[1] Friday, Feb. 8th.

fleet had been ordered to Constantinople,[1] and further explained that the Russian movements (correctly reported, as they said, by Mr. Layard) had been made in pursuance, and not in contravention, of the armistice, but that it was obvious the terms of the armistice gave Russia the power of entering Constantinople whenever she pleased.

The debate on the vote of credit was proceeded with, but all heart had gone out of the resistance.

Still, advantage was taken of the opportunity to advert to the larger aspects of the question, and to deprecate a policy of cutting down the measures of emancipation which had been extorted from Turkey.[2]

Meanwhile the Ministers kept their own counsel.

> *The Marquis of Hartington*:—We have received from the Government as yet no guide or clue to the policy which this vote is intended to follow, a course which is not fair to the House of Commons, and certainly not fair to the country. The Government will no doubt obtain this vote, and obtain also that which they choose to consider as a vote of confidence in their policy, but of what use is a vote of confidence given plainly in ignorance of the policy the Government is pursuing, and which cannot have the value, the undoubted value, of a vote of confidence given on full knowledge and a right understanding? It may be said that the Government have told us their policy. I admit certain statements have been made; they have told us their wishes, their aspirations, and their hopes, that their policy is to maintain peace, to bring about a permanent peace in Europe, to protect the interests of Great Britain, and to strengthen the influence of England in the councils of Europe. But all these are generalities which any Government, no matter whatever might be its real policy and course of conduct, would equally be able to make use of. These generalities have their meaning, but they do not constitute a policy, and to ask and obtain from the House of Commons a credit of six millions does not constitute a policy either. . . . . But although I think they have approached us in the wrong way and at the wrong time, I am not prepared, under the circumstances in which we find ourselves, to resist this vote.—*H. of C.* Feb. 8th.

Mr. Gladstone was among those who still protested.

> *Mr. Gladstone*:—Why are we to be told we are going to stop the supplies? I affirm that that is an abuse of language. It is a phrase that no Minister ought to use, except upon the

[1] *Ante*, p. 336.

[2] *Ante*, p. 320.

coercion of a real occasion. "Stopping the supplies" is an expression that is perfectly well known in the history of this country. . . . It has no connection whatever with the question of a sum not necessary to discharge the service of the State. . . It is his duty to ask us for so much as will be wanted, and there is no precedent for any departure from that rule and that proceeding. And then I am told that it shows an old-womanish regard for dusty antiquity to look for precedents. But I hold that on this question of taxation and public charge precedent is the very life of our proceedings. . . . I really am not able to give my support to a vote which my right hon. friend has utterly failed to connect with the objects he has in view, which is contrary to the wise and established rule on which the most vital of all the functions of this House have been for generations past uniformly performed, and which in worse times than these and worse hands than those may prove to have established a precedent dangerous to the Constitution. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. Faweett said he should be wanting in candour if he did not express the opinion that the leader of the Opposition, and those who were going to act with him, would be abrogating their functions in a great crisis of their country's history in not voting one way or the other, and in withdrawing from the House as if they had no opinion on the subject. (Cheers.)—*H. of C.* Feb. 8th.

At twenty minutes past twelve the motion that the vote pass was put from the chair, whereupon the Marquis of Hartington, Mr. Forster, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Childers, and about forty Liberals walked out amid ironical cheers from the Ministerial benches. Mr. Bright, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Dodson, Mr. Baxter and Mr. Shaw Lefevre voted in the minority. Among Irish members Mr. A. M. Sullivan and Mr. Mitchell Henry voted with the Opposition. The division showed 328 for the vote of credit, and 124 against it. The vote was then agreed to. The announcement of the figures was received with loud cheers from the Ministerial benches.—*D. N.* Feb. 9th.

Some discussion took place at the later stages, but no further serious opposition was offered in Parliament to the vote of credit.

§ 3. *Breakdown of Agitation Out of Doors.*

Fear of rousing warlike passions at home to an ungovernable pitch had much to do with the breakdown of the parliamentary resistance to measures which, if they were not actually the development of a "red" policy, might, at all events, easily become so.

Meanwhile the agitation out of doors which accompanied the

parliamentary struggle, exhibits strongly the infirmities of Agitation itself as a mode of ascertaining the true direction of Public Opinion at a time when opinion is very much excited and divided. This infirmity consists not so much in the difficulty of weighing meeting against counter-meeting, as in the fact that at such times these enormous meetings become a grave danger to the public peace. A small organised band prepared to risk a breach of the peace is able to upset and throw into confusion an immense meeting, and thus deprive it, if not of all moral weight, yet of all articulate expression. Excited to a most dangerous pitch by all the topics of prejudice which could be urged, and especially by the notion that Russia was keeping the English Government in the dark while her armies were closing round Constantinople, the anti-Russian feeling in this country reached high-water mark. In February, 1878, mass meetings were held in London and various other towns to denounce opposition to the Government as unpatriotic. A significant change of tone begins to be observable in the *Times*. The "red" newspapers write in a strain of greater confidence, and the "violet" journals display a deeper anxiety. Elements of opposition come to the front in the meetings called to protest against the "red" policy. At this juncture these meetings begin to be broken up. It is difficult to say how far these disturbances indicate a genuine and spontaneous accession of "red" opinion taking this rough method to put down what it regarded as an unpatriotic movement, and how far they indicate a factitious opposition organised by unseen agencies for the purpose of detracting from the weight of the "violet" meetings.

Rumours were rife which pointed to the latter explanation. The crisis remained acute, but the "violet" party seemed suddenly daunted, though they held as strongly as ever to their opinion of the criminal folly of the policy on which the Government seemed bent.

It is hardly too much to say that out-of-door agitation was *put down*.

The first important meeting where an amendment was carried against a resolution praying the House of Commons to reject the vote of credit, was one which was held in the open air at Sheffield on January 29th. This was regarded as an event of great significance,[1] and it was quickly followed by other indications of the same kind.

[1] *D. T.* Jan 30th.

Yesterday afternoon the neighbourhood of Cannon Street Railway Station, the street, hotel, and railway yard presented an extraordinary scene of tumult for nearly three hours. A meeting had been called for 3 o'clock by the City Neutrality Committee "to protest against the vote of six millions for war purposes;" but about 2 o'clock a large and excellently organised war party, under the leadership of the agents prominent in "Conservative working men" and other Conservative organisations, marched into the hotel. The crowd was composed, in a great degree, of well-dressed, but very unruly, young men. Finding by the tablets on the stairs that there was a meeting of members of the City Liberal Club in one of the rooms—the meeting being held to discuss the policy of altering one of the rules—the mob burst into the room, and dispersed the occupants. Finding that there was then no opposite party to combat—for the conveners of the meeting had not arrived—the war party occupied the corridors and the stairs, where they expressed in shouts their readiness to go to war, and engaged in horse-play. The police were sent for, and Inspector Foster, with a strong force of City police, gradually cleared the hotel. In the courtyard of the station the war party received the assistance of the "Association for the Protection of British Interests in the East" in the shape of a person who wore a Turkish "fez" and waved a British flag. . . . At the distance of a few feet not a sentence could be heard from those who were supposed to be speakers, and printed placards were held up calling upon the meeting to support the Government. The crowd afterwards went *en masse* to the Guildhall, intending, if permission could be obtained, to hold a meeting in that building in support of Her Majesty's Government. On their way there they paused outside the Mansion-house and gave three cheers for the Lord Mayor, whose Conservative opinions, although he has hitherto taken no political part in any matter, are well known in the City of London. Though somewhat late in the afternoon, the Guildhall happened to be open, and the building was rapidly filled by an enthusiastic and excited mob singing national airs and waving, amid great applause, the British flag. The Lord Mayor, Mr. Alderman Owden, who had been presiding at a meeting of the Court of Common Council, was intercepted and "interviewed" by a deputation of prominent City Conservatives, of whom Sir Robert Carden was one, and by them induced to allow the meeting to be held, his formal consent being, it seemed, necessary. As the great hall was thronged with almost infuriated people such consent was quite a farce, but, nevertheless, it was obtained, and, what was more, the Lord Mayor himself agreed to preside. His appearance was the signal for loud applause. [A resolution was passed in support of the Government amid enthusiastic cheering, and signed by the Lord Mayor as chairman.] A deputation from the meeting at Guildhall, consisting of Mr. R. N. Fowler (chairman of the Conservative Association), Alderman Sir Robert W. Carden, Mr. H. Rokeby-Price, Mr. Walter Hindley, and Mr. Edwin

Hughes, proceeded to the House of Commons. The Government whips having been communicated with, the deputation retired to a private room, where Lord John Manners received them. [He said] he was glad that the City of London had—not for the first time—done its duty . . . . and he hoped and believed that the manifestation which they had witnessed that day would be generally followed throughout the country.—*T.* Feb. 1st.

Mr. Trevelyan earnestly hoped, in the interest of the order and decency of public discussion in these heated times, that the Home Secretary would not find it necessary to speak in the country as he had spoken in that House.[1]

Yesterday in several parts of the metropolis meetings were disturbed by organised gangs. ("No" and "Hear.") Well, to please hon. gentlemen opposite he would modify that expression; but private rooms were entered and sacked, windows and doors were destroyed, large mobs of well-dressed people assembled, who alternately cheered for Turkey, cried "Down with Russia!" and gave three cheers for Her Majesty's Ministers. (Cheers from the Ministerial side.) Turkish banners were displayed, and men, some of them of advanced age, whose only fault was that at a great crisis they had gone to do a citizen's duty by giving an opinion on national affairs, were hustled, ill-used, and driven off the scene. A deputation afterwards came down to that House to give the Ministry a history of these riotous and illegal proceedings. They were received by Her Majesty's Postmaster-General, whom they informed that the opponents of the Government had not the pluck to risk their lives or limbs, but were obliged to disappear down back stairs, and the only judgment the noble lord thought fit to pass on those proceedings was to tell the deputation that he was glad the City had done its duty. (Ministerial cheers.) If that was the way in which the Ministry discouraged war passions, all he could say was that he should not hesitate to characterise them as the leaders of the war party (hear, hear), even although, as the result of giving that opinion, his windows were broken with the approbation of the Postmaster-General.—*H. of C.* Feb. 1st.

Stormy meetings were held at Bermondsey and Peckham on February 2nd.[2]

On the same day a meeting estimated at 20,000 to 28,000 persons was held in support of the Government at the Pomona Gardens, Manchester.

In a letter addressed to the chairman the Premier wrote:—

Meetings of this character afford striking evidence of the spirit and determination of the country; and Lord Beaconsfield cordially thanks the citizens of Manchester for their generous confidence and well-timed assistance.—*Lord Beaconsfield's letter in T.* Feb. 9th.

[1] *Ante*, p. 319.

[2] *D. N.* Feb. 4th.

Contemporaneously with the Pomona Gardens meeting, a meeting of about from ten to twelve thousand persons was held in Stevenson-square, Manchester, where resolutions were passed unanimously protesting against the war vote and expressing want of confidence in the Government.

A "Loyal and Patriotic Meeting" to which "Supporters of the foriegn policy of the Government, and all who are desirous of upholding the honour and interests of the country at the present crisis," were invited by anonymous advertisement, and where many not supplied with tickets were refused admission, was held in Exeter Hall on February 6th. Opinions were divided, but the supporters of the Government were in the majority.[1]

A demonstration in support of the Government was held in Cremorne Gardens in the afternoon of February 9th.

> Shortly before the meeting closed Sir Coutts Lindsay received a communication from Lord Beaconsfield inquiring as to the character and tone of the meeting, to which the following reply was immediately despatched:—"Sir Coutts Lindsay to Earl Beaconsfield.—Upwards of 5,000 people have given enthusiastic support to a resolution approving the conduct of the Government."—*T.* Feb. 11th.

> As soon as the people of this country began thoroughly to realise the fact that the Liberal party in Parliament contemplated a serious opposition to the vote of credit, a marked change may have been observed in their demeanour. . . . The immense open-air meeting which was held at Cremorne last Saturday fitly crowns a week of such popular excitement as England has not seen for years. . . . From north, south, east, and west has risen up one overwhelming protest against the policy of the Opposition, from Liberals as well as from Conservatives, and from Radicals as well as from Liberals. Whatever may have been the character of this or that particular meeting, the demonstration in the aggregate has been what the Cremorne meeting was intended to be—a reflex of public opinion independently of party prepossessions. There is no longer any excuse for timidity or irresolution on the part of any member of the Government. On the contrary, the danger is now that if the Government is too backward the people will be too forward; and that the national excitement and indignation will hurry us into the very extremities which the Opposition professes to be afraid of.—*St.* Feb. 11th.

The collapse of the Liberal resistance to the vote of credit in the House of Commons was a deep disappointment, but there were those who thought that a strenuous agitation might still serve to

[1] *T.* Feb. 7th.

bring the pressure of Public Opinion in an effective form upon the Government and hold them back from war.

> It is useless, after what has happened last night, to conceal from ourselves that some of the great Liberal party are in a funk. The joints of our knees are loosened. . . . Our nerves are in that condition that we are ready to embrace the Government, obtain favourable terms for Turkey, tax the freedom of the Bulgarians, withdraw amendments, walk out of the House without voting, believe Mr. Layard's telegrams, or take any other equally well-considered and consistent step which the panic of the moment dictates. . . . Is this creditable? Is it reasonable? Is it manly or honest for those who have hitherto led the party in favour of peace and friendly relations with Russia, now to yield ground, and make over at a moment's notice the power and the support of the whole country to the Government? . . . Is not this the moment when on our side the steadiest temper and firmest hand are required to keep pressure on that Government, or that man in the Government who, with consummate skill, has led the country step by step up to the giddy point where it now stands. . . . Are the Liberals all over England changed in mind and feeling? Have they in the last forty-eight hours learnt to adore what they hated, and to hate what they adored? Are they prepared to unsay what they have said again and again in the most solemn and earnest manner, that war with Russia would be unjust, unnecessary, and a crime? I do not believe it. I believe that the country clings to its old convictions: that it does not change thus lightly; that it is prepared to put out all its efforts again in the cause of peace; and that all it asks of its leaders is to stand as firmly and truly by it as it is prepared to stand firmly and truly by them. . . . I entreat you now to use your influence in the same fearless manner you have so often used it during these two anxious years. It is to public opinion rather than to the House of Commons that we must trust.—*Mr. Auberon Herbert* in *D. N.* Feb. 12th.

A great meeting to protest against the warlike designs of which the Government were suspected was arranged to be held in the Agricultural Hall at Islington on February 21st.

However, on the 19th the Workmen's Neutrality Committee resolved that it was advisable that the meeting should be postponed. The reason assigned was the altered aspect of affairs, resulting from the departure of the fleet from the immediate neighbourhood of Constantinople.[1] What probably weighed more heavily upon the Committee was apprehension of the consequences of a threatened disturbance in so vast an assemblage.[2]

[1] *D. N.* Feb. 21st.

[2] It was rumoured that a number of workmen employed in Woolwich Arsena were coming to break up the meeting. This rumour carried with it a suggestion

The promoters of the meeting with some reluctance acquiesced in the suggestion, and the decision was announced in a circular signed by Mr. Henry Broadhurst.

> In deference to the earnestly expressed wish of a number of gentlemen in Parliament, it has been decided to postpone the meeting. . . . It is with deep regret that the committee have felt themselves compelled to take this course. They feel it to be their duty to say that although they were obliged to concur in the advice given, they did not share in the views held by those who advised this extreme step.—*Mr. H. Broadhurst's Circular*, see *D. N.* Feb. 21st.

Mr. Gladstone replied, acquiescing in the decision. He added:—

> "In your end and aim which, as I understand them, were to support the Government in all measures taken in the interest of peace and of freedom, I have received ample evidence that the great mass of the working men of this country are firmly united with you. Nor can I think that your preliminary labours have been thrown away, when I learn that they have supplied you with proof of the anxiety, not of thousands only, but of tens of thousands, without reference to domestic politics, to testify this feeling by their presence and attention at a calm and orderly assemblage.
>
> As to the means you had chosen, the question is a nice one, what amount of urgency in the actual state of public affairs is such as to justify you exposing masses of the people to the possible inconveniences which, in meetings on a vast scale, it is often practicable for a few handfuls of persons, opposed to sober discussion, to bring about.—*Mr. Gladstone's reply*, see *D. N.* Feb. 21st.

There were those who did not concur in the view that the dangers of prolonging the agitation at this juncture outweighed the dangers of silence. Accordingly it was determined to attempt further demonstrations against any development of the "red" policy.

A meeting was organised by the Hon. Auberon Herbert and Mr. Bradlaugh for the afternoon of Sunday, February 24th, in Hyde Park.

that Government officials were not averse to seeing the meeting forcibly suppressed. That such a rumour should have gained currency is significant, however much it may have distorted facts. There can be no doubt that there was an intention in some quarters to organise disturbance. Mr. W. S. Tuke writes from the University College Hospital (*D. N.* Feb. 21st) saying he had been familiarly accosted by an individual who spoke of a notice requesting all medical students to meet on Thursday in Trafalgar Square and march with bands and flying colours to the Agricultural Hall, there to hoot down Mr. Gladstone.

The resolutions which it was intended to move were three in number :—

> 1. That this meeting emphatically pronounces in favour of peace.
>
> 2. That this meeting demands that the country shall be consulted before any step is taken which may involve Great Britain in war.
>
> 3. That this meeting demands that the influence of Great Britain be employed on behalf of the full enfranchisement of the subject races of Turkey.—*D. N.* Feb. 25th.

A Mr. Stokes had given notice of a "patriotic amendment," and facilities were promised him for moving it.

An immense crowd assembled to witness the proceedings, and Hyde Park became the scene of a collision, which might have been attended with very serious consequences, between the promoters of the meeting, and their opponents who had organised themselves to suppress it.

A body calling themselves the "National and Patriotic League" had gathered together a considerable concourse of people who marched under the guidance of Lieutenant Armit with flags and bands to Hyde Park, and taking up a position near the Marble Arch, proceeded to pass resolutions in support of the Government.

Meanwhile, some rough opposition was expected, and prepared for, by the promoters of the anti-war meeting.

> In answer to an inquiry how any organised attempt to break up the meeting would be met, Mr. Bradlaugh opened his coat and showed a truncheon in an inside pocket, very neatly turned and finished. A thousand men he declared, so armed, were ready to aid him.—*D. N.* Feb. 25th.

A ring of men linked arm in arm was formed round the improvised platform.

The promoters circulated in the crowd papers of printed instructions which comprised the following appeal :—

> We appeal to all our own friends to assist us in securing this object [a hearing for the mover of an amendment]; . . . . to do their utmost to preserve the order and peace of the meeting, so that the opinion of the London people may be fairly and truly known, whether it be in favour of peace or of war. We entreat all friends and supporters that not a single hand shall be lifted, not a single blow shall be struck, except in self-defence; if in self-defence and to protect those who are assembling in the exercise of their own privilege, then we bid them as Englishmen to endeavour at every cost to maintain the rights of free meeting and free speech.—*Quoted in D. N.* Feb. 25th.

At the time appointed Mr. Auberon Herbert mounted the table to commence the proceedings.

> [We are here to-day to protest against any action which may tend to war; also to vindicate the right of free speech and of free meeting.] (Loud cheers.) That right has been too much interfered with of late in London (cheers), and a few persons have become possessed of the belief that it is enough to give a certain amount of beer and a certain amount of money to break up and interrupt your peaceable meetings. (Loud cheers.) Gentlemen, we shall show I hope to-day that that is not so. You are here determined to stand by your rights, determined that the right of free meeting shall not be taken from us.—*Mr. A. Herbert.*

At this juncture Lieutenant Armit's forces moved down upon Mr. Bradlaugh's position—a rush was made, and the peace meeting was swept away. Staves were drawn, and sticks were flourished in the air, but blows, it seems, save in exceptional instances, were not struck with them.[1] Attempts were made in vain to rally the meeting, and to re-commence the proceedings. A series of confused rushes took place, in which the shooting crocuses and snowdrops in the newly-planted beds were heedlessly trampled down, while the remnants of the peace meeting passed out into Park Lane.

The Leaguers made the circuit of the park in triumph, and then proceeded to Downing Street to present their resolutions to Lord Beaconsfield. The Premier was not within, but shortly arrived in a carriage, accompanied by Lord Barrington, who made a short speech to the mob who filled Downing Street, telling them that Lord Beaconsfield was very much gratified with the enthusiastic reception they had given him, and that he would take an early opportunity of receiving Lieutenant Armit and his friends.[2]

The crowd withdrew to Whitehall and Trafalgar Square, whence a section of them proceeded, hooting and yelling, to Harley Street, to break Mr. Gladstone's windows.

> The Peace Meeting in Hyde Park yesterday afternoon passed off, if not without many disturbances, at all events without grave

[1] The *D. N.* (Feb. 25th) says:—"Nobody seemed to care to begin." . . . "There were no direct attempts at violence, beyond a few efforts to capture Mr. Bradlaugh's staff as he waved it in the air to rally his friends. But on the outskirts of the crowd were many people, mostly middle-aged and elderly gentlemen flourishing sticks, thick enough to fell a bull, screaming out, 'Down with the traitor,' and venting their rage in the most extraordinary and uncouth epithets. Nothing came of all this 'barking' however. Those who were nearer the staves preferred not to try a violent argument."

The *D. T.* (Feb. 25th) speaks of a few broken heads under treatment at St. George's Hospital, and says "Mr. Bradlaugh's truncheon was taken from him, and was given into the hands of Lieutenant Armit. The treatment of Mr. Herbert was rather rough; and he had his clothes torn as he retreated to the boat-house."

[2] *T.* and *D. T.* Feb. 25th.

results. We owe this, however, to the firmness and forbearance of the organisers of the meeting, not to the good feeling and good temper of the muscular opponents of its object. There may be differences of opinion as to the necessity for holding public meetings at this juncture. But, looking to the Cannon Street and the Hyde Park meetings, there can scarcely be two opinions that Mr. Auberon Herbert was right yesterday when he said that freedom of public meeting was now at stake.—*D. N.* Feb. 25th.

There has been, no doubt, a considerable change in the national sentiment since the destruction of the Ottoman Power. The effacement of the Turks has left many Englishmen free to say that they will not embarrass by inconsiderate protests the Government in its efforts to guard British interests, and the fear that unqualified declarations in favour of peace may encourage Russian aggression has been quickened by some recent events. It is rash, to say the least, of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Auberon Herbert to assume now that they have the whole nation with them; and if they want either to convince their opponents or to take the measure of their strength, they can surely find some more effective means than demonstrations in Hyde Park. Questions of policy cannot be settled by flaunting flags and passing resolutions, still less by smashing platforms and breaking windows. The political protests of huge mobs are anachronisms.—*T.* Feb. 25th.

There is this to be said in defence of the anti-Russian meetings, that the agitation which they represent is a defensive one. A considerable number of people have been dragged into this way of giving publicity to their opinions by the absurd bluster and bragging of the other side. The constant assertion on the part of Russian sympathisers that they are the people of England, that they represent the working classes, and so forth, is an excuse, if not an absolute justification, for the counter-demonstration which these grandiloquent falsehoods have evoked. In plain language, the National party has said to the Cosmopolitan party, "Two can play at that game." And as two naturally make more noise than one, we are now harassed with two meetings which threaten to turn reason deaf.—*St.* Feb. 25th.

A renewed attempt to hold a meeting in Hyde Park a fortnight later (Sunday, March 10th) only resulted in a repetition of the disorderly and dangerous scenes of February 24th, with even less, perhaps, of political significance. Again the cry was raised "To Gladstone's," and some six thousand people, waving Turkish flags and Union Jacks, made for Harley Street; but the prompt action of a large force of police who blocked the openings of the thoroughfares abutting on it, kept the crowd from Mr. Gladstone's house.[1]

[1] *D. N.* March 11th.

The collapse of the resistance in Parliament to the vote of credit, the breaking up of the Cannon Street meeting, the abandonment of the meeting announced to be held in the Agricultural Hall, the dispersions of the attempted meetings in Hyde Park;—these events seemed to mark the defeat of the "violet" opinion in its struggle to find expression in the course of the State in the great international controversy which was in hand. The characteristic of the period which followed is the phenomenon that the body of opinion which, if somewhat staggered in its faith, still believed itself to be the preponderating opinion of our country—this body of opinion was at last brought to feel itself helpless against the Premier as he drew the country to the very verge of war, and to doubt the efficiency of all those means for securing the sovereignty of Public Opinion on which such implicit reliance had hitherto been placed.

Through the long crisis while peace and war were trembling in the balance, from time to time, here and there, efforts were made to reorganise resistance, and to renew agitation[1]; but the tone of those who strove to raise their voices against the war which seemed imminent, was disheartened and desponding. They were no longer encouraged to hope that their efforts would exercise any real influence upon the issue.

> I should like to say a very few words with regard to the power and the strength of an Opposition in an emergency like this. The other day I stated in the House of Lords—and nobody contradicted me—that I believed it was possible for a Government who wished it to drag the country into a war upon almost any cause. I did not refer merely to the technical power which the Constitution gives to the advisers of the Crown to declare war or to make peace. I meant the power that they have, by adopting step after step which it is very difficult to retrace, of exciting feelings in the country sometimes of a very noble character and sometimes of a very low character (hear), which we see from time to time take absolute possession of some of the most civilised nations as well as some of the most barbarous. I really do not remember any case, except when Mr. Fox and some of his friends, under a most fortunate combination of circumstances, prevented the Conservative Government of that day going into an unnecessary war with Russia—I do not remember any case except this where an Opposition has been really successful in stemming the wishes of a determined Cabinet. . . . Generally, wars have been averted by the prudence of the Government and not by the power of the Opposition. I believe it would be deceiving ourselves, deceiving Europe—it would

[1] *Post*, chap. xviii. § 7, *g*.

> be deceiving especially Russia—if we were to pretend that we have power to control the Government if they are determined, which I still trust they are not, to drag this country into a war, for which at present I cannot see any real justification. (Loud cheers.) In saying this I beg it to be clearly understood that I do not think it relieves us from the obligation of doing what we can in and out of Parliament to influence the conduct of the Government or to enlighten public opinion. But I think I say this with still greater strength from saying to you with perfect candour what is my opinion with regard to the exact position of affairs.—*Lord Granville.*[1]

The characteristic feature of the time is its resemblance to a dictatorship. However counter they might be going to Public Opinion, the Government had a parliamentary majority on which they could rely, and, speaking broadly, agitation, as a force which the Government need take into account in shaping their course, was overcome.

§ 4. *Growing Acerbity Out of Doors.*

The appeal unceasingly made to the warlike proclivities of the people had succeeded at last. A stratum of opinion that could only conceive of patriotism in connection with the notion of some enemy to be humiliated and overthrown had now caught fire. A speech which Mr. Cowen delivered in the House of Commons, on the report of the vote of credit,[2] ministered to the popular passion.

> If he wishes this country to fight Russia, to fight her instantly and at any cost, his heated rhetoric is perfectly intelligible, and is pretty good of its kind. . . . But if the member for Newcastle does not wish to push this country into war without the loss of a day, his rhetorical vehemence passes the bounds of intelligibility. So, we must add, do the wild cheers with which the supporters of the Government greeted his passionate denunciations of a Government, an army, and a Church which are not usually supposed to be superlatively endowed with Christian meekness. Mr. Cowen's invectives against Russia were appropriately accompanied by a glowing eulogy of Turkey. . . . It is impossible to sever Mr. Cowen's hostility to Russia and his admiration for Turkey from the theory of patriotism which he stated in an earlier stage of the discussion on the vote of credit, and repeated last night. Party distinctions, he suggested, were all very well in debates on domestic subjects, but they should be forgotten when national interests are

[1] In reply to a deputation in reference to the policy and conduct of the Government on the Eastern Question, April 3rd, *post*, § 7, *g*.
[2] *H. of C.* Feb. 11th.

at stake. We ought then to forget whether we are Whigs, Radicals, or Conservatives, and remember only that we are Englishmen. We ought to find our ideal in the heroic past, "when none were for a party and all were for the State." . . . . "The maintenance of the integrity and independence of Turkey is," he contends, "just as much a principle of our foreign as Free Trade is of our domestic policy." . . . Therefore, adds Mr. Cowen, the Liberal party and the whole country ought to have steadfastly supported the Eastern policy of Her Majesty's Government. . . . Had the policy of the Government been such as Mr. Cowen supposes, we ought to have fought by the side of Turkey. But the country decided that it would attempt no such hopeless enterprise as the defence of a State which is perishing of decay. If the Government encountered opposition, it was precisely because the country was uncertain whether some Ministers had wholly abandoned any such intention. Mr. Cowen thinks that the Government ought now to be let alone, and we quite agree with him. But he is not letting it alone; he is pushing it towards war if his rhetoric has any meaning.—*T.* Feb. 12th.

The fever had long been rising, and it reached its climax with the despatch of the fleet and the announcement that the Russians would enter Constantinople as soon as the English ships came up. The writing of the *Times* is inspired by the widespread "erubescence," and, though still sober in tone itself, it bears witness to the rising excitement.

[Though Russia] has pushed her military advantage, as may have been her right, to the extreme limit, she is under an honourable pledge to go no further. Should she do so, under any pretext, she would arouse a suspicion and an excitement in this country of which the last two days have afforded some dangerous premonitory symptoms.—*T.* Feb. 9th.

Mingled perplexity and excitement are the feelings which have been raised in this country by the latest movements of Russia, and still more, perhaps, by the latest announcement of her intentions. How curiously those feelings are blended may be seen from the disorder in the ranks even of the Conservative party, which is usually a model of parliamentary discipline. It is no secret that a considerable number of its members are profoundly dissatisfied with that side of the Ministerial policy which is represented by Lord Derby, and which is supposed to have no other hearty advocate in the Cabinet. That is the section which sent a deputation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Russians were drawing near to Constantinople, and which was soon rewarded, not only by the first movement of the fleet, but by the resignation of Lord Carnarvon. . . . The Russian Government, which is supposed to follow the successive phases of English feeling with some interest, may, however, profitably study the protest even of staunch Conservatives against the policy of Lord Derby, for it is one of many

> signs that the tension is extreme. Hitherto the good sense of the country has proved amply sufficient to restrain the party which has demanded intervention. . . . [Alarm was spread by the mystery attending the negotiation, and uneasiness was increased by the indefiniteness of the conditions. The effect produced by the surrender of the defences of Constantinople appeared in the collapse of the resistance to the vote of credit, and by the despatch of the fleet.] But the present state of uneasiness was not reached until Russia announced that the arrival of our ships would give the signal for the entry of her troops into Constantinople. . . . The truth is that Prince Gortschakoff has committed a signal diplomatic mistake, and it would not be surprising to hear that he had yielded to the military party against his own better judgment.—*T.* Feb. 14th.

At this critical time there appears to have been a needless affectation and display of mystery and reserve, on the part of Prince Gortschakoff, which had a most exasperating effect on English nerves, and which, as was remarked, did little credit to the vaunted astuteness of the Russian diplomatists.

Not only had the English Government been informed in the preceding summer of what the demands of victorious Russia would be, but the bases of peace which had been actually accepted by the Turks had been communicated, bases from which the treaty under discussion proved not materially to differ. How was it then that there were these continual complaints that the English Government was being kept in the dark?

The fact seems to be that the temper in England was such as to suspect a diplomatic snare at every turn. The Russian diplomatists may possibly have considered that such a temper went far to make every communication short of the completed treaty worse than useless, or they may have considered that they were gaining a triumph of some kind in annoying opponents to the verge of exasperation. However this may be, the delay which ensued before the armistice was concluded with the Turkish envoys, who were sent to the Russian head-quarters after the English application to Russia had met with the reply that the Porte, if they wanted peace, must sue for it directly;[1] the affectation of mystery and reserve which was suddenly assumed with respect to the transactions between the belligerents; the further delay which elapsed before peace was actually signed, and again, before the terms were officially communicated to the English Government; all these circumstances produced an impression that the Russian diplomatists

[1] *Ante*, p. 267.

were preparing a mine to spring upon England. One point in particular on which considerable apprehension was felt, and on which the public mind showed itself extremely sensitive, was the supposed intention of the Russian Government to obtain the cession of the Turkish fleet.

No amount of special pleading can do away with the patent fact that, even if the Czar has kept his promise to this country according to the letter, he has allowed its spirit to be unscrupulously violated.

"It is difficult to believe," says the *Economist*, "that any military advantage Russia may have gained by concealing her intentions is great enough to compensate for the irritation which the discovery of them has caused in this country. It is scarcely too much to say that for four-and-twenty hours the decision between peace and war rested wholly with the Cabinet. If the Government had wished to fight Russia they might have fought her. The Peace Party . . . was completely broken to pieces by the concealment of the terms of the armistice."

It cannot be doubted that Russia has given this country a *casus belli* by its tortuous and self-seeking conduct, or that Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues have shown themselves true statesmen by refusing to grasp at the opportunity.—*St.* Feb. 11th.

The consequences of the violent agitation at length collapsed hang heavily upon England's policy to-day. The mischief-mongers, it is true, are silent and discomfited, but the mischief survives. They betrayed England into the costly error of leaving Turkey to be overrun, and their friends the Russians have now betrayed them also by falsifying all their assurances, and changing the so-called pious crusade into a naked invasion of aggrandisement. . . . . The terms of peace pressed upon the Porte at Adrianople are not known in their entirety, because it is a part of the Russian stipulations to keep them concealed; but enough is known to show that they are so monstrous and immoderate that, with all his desire for a settlement, the Sultan cannot even discuss them. . . . [There are] two impending and especial perils—the armed entry of the Russians into Constantinople, and their seizure of the Ottoman Navy. As to the Sultan's ironclads, the possession of them by the Russians must—we say it plainly—be absolutely forbidden. Such a transfer would not, indeed, furnish a political *casus belli;* but it would constitute a national and a European danger so sudden, large, and revolutionary that technicalities would need to be cast aside, and the seizure or surrender prohibited or reversed. No Christians could possibly be "ameliorated" by such vast Imperial burglary. The entry into the capital after so many pledges, and in view of the fact that no "military necessity" for it could be pleaded, would present an almost unavoidable *casus belli;* for nothing short of the ratification of the Russian conditions from the Danube to the Euphrates could otherwise procure the restitution of Constantinople and the Straits.—*D. T.* Feb. 23rd.

On the very eve, or day, as was alleged, of the signature of the treaty of peace we remain in the same uncertainty respecting its terms as was acknowledged on Monday. . . . It is necessary to say that the mystery which is thus, to the very last, maintained with respect to the Russian terms of peace is equally unreasonable in itself, and offensive to Europe. It may also prove a most mistaken piece of tactics on the part of the Russian Government. . . If the terms of peace damage neither the interests of England nor the interests of Austria, the limits of which must be well understood at St. Petersburg, there can be no reason whatever for the secrecy which is so ostentatiously observed. Its effect can only be to obstruct what must be supposed to be the wish of Russia, namely, the speedy recognition by Europe of the results of the war. . . . But, at critical moments like the present, it is imprudent to fan suspicion into a passion, and it is this which is being done by the Russian diplomatists.—*T.* Feb. 27th.

Almost every new piece of information that has been received of late as to the demands of Russia has added to the gravity of the prospect. The impression created in this country has been that Russia was fully determined to settle things in her own way, without regard to the wishes of England or of any other of the interested Powers. The result has been a stirring of the public mind in this country, and a counter-determination to insist, by force if necessary, on the maintenance of our admitted rights.—*T.* March 2nd.

There was no earthly reason for dropping the curtain recently for ten days while the armistice negotiations were going on, and so driving English temper up to blood-heat, when a few words of information would have removed half the alarm. The Russians say, and we believe say truly, the delay was due to the Turks who were perpetually referring to Constantinople, but they could have said that without waiting so long, and so making everybody, even Prince Bismarck—as he says in his speech—fancy that they were wilfully kept waiting for news in a sort of European antechamber till Prince Gortschakoff should be fully dressed and ready to receive them. . . . There was, as the gathering storm of opinion at last showed them, immense want of tact and of diplomatic skill. So there is now in this new delay. We dare say it is the fault of the Turks, who resist every point in the not unnatural hope that something may turn up; . . . but the effect of it is "tension"—the diffusion in England of a belief that "something dangerous is up," and to allow such a belief to be diffused, is not skill. . . . Take the most serious case of all, the terms said to have been demanded by Russia from Turkey. . . . Russia did win after great sacrifices, and what did her diplomatists do? So present almost unchanged terms, that half Europe grew furious over their severity.—*Spec.* March 2nd.

The violent anti-Russian feeling which had been excited was

reflected in the popular war-songs of the London music halls;[1] The "Jingoes"[2] as they now began to be called, caught eagerly at every topic which could prejudice the enemy, and seemed to burn for the fray to begin.

Some of the bellicose manifestations provoked remonstrance from the more sober upholders of the "red" policy.

> The meeting at Exeter Hall last night, to protest against the Russian policy of greed and chicanery, was enthusiastic and warlike, but a little more tolerance would have entitled its proceedings to greater consideration. An attempt to move an amendment to the first resolution provoked such an outburst of impatience on the part of the audience as for a moment threatened to end in disturbance. . . . Eighteen months ago, when the agitation on Bulgarian outrages was disseminating false estimates of English sentiment and English policy throughout Europe, such a demonstration might have been useful; at any rate, it would have been intelligible, and not unnatural. Now, we cannot help saying it appears out of date, and not altogether free from objection. When Mr. Gladstone appealed from Parliament to the mob we gave plain expression to our disapproval of the mischievous innovation; we cannot say we like it any better when the popular meetings are held in support of a policy more in accordance with the interests of the Empire. It was only necessary to witness the lightness of heart with which it varied its political discussions by singing "Rule Britannia," and "We don't want to fight," to be satisfied that such an assemblage as was gathered in Exeter Hall last night is little qualified to determine on the grave issues of peace or war, or to lay down a programme for Ministers to follow. We cannot help thinking, then, that public meetings of the kind just now are likely to do more harm than good.—*St.* March 6th.

Meanwhile, the *Daily Telegraph*[3] represented Russia as receding before the firm attitude of England, and flattered the imagination of its readers by picturing the easy victory which England would achieve, and the hundred-years' peace which would follow the war in which the disturber of Europe should be finally overthrown.

[1] The swells as was used to pooh-pooh us now follers our lead like a lamb.

> They was down on the music halls once, called 'em caddish and vulgar and low,
> But they've took a leaf out of our book, and our war-songs is now all the go,—
> . . . . . Our notions precisely agree,
> And the Great Bounce's row-de-dow chants hits off both our hidears to a T.
> —*Punch*, March 9th.

Compare *Punch*, Feb. 2nd, p. 45, "Vox Populi," and May 4th, p. 196, "A Fellow Feeling."

[2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 59.

[3] March 2nd.

§ 5. *Considerations involved in the Negotiations.*

The considerations involved in the negotiations arising out of the agreement come to between Russia and Turkey at San Stefano were very complex. Obviously there was the question as to the nature of the arrangements which England should support in the pending re-adjustment. But apart from the merits of the proposals which were to be brought forward, the English Ministry raised a question as to the manner in which the question should be approached, which once more well-nigh led to a breach with Russia. Thus in the negotiations which took place after the tiding over of the danger of an immediate collision between the English and Russian forces near Constantinople, there was in the first place a point of form involving general principles of the highest importance, and in the second place a point of substance, involving the consideration of the details of the particular case.

a. Apprehensions of a Russo-Turkish alliance.—The prospect of peace between Russia and Turkey was regarded with jealousy, if not alarm, in England, as significant of an agreement between them, which would be fatal to those English interests on which the plea for English protection of Turkey was based. There was an apprehension that the policy of the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, with its secret article,[1] was again in the ascendant. There were not wanting indications that in such an event Turkey might become involved in the hostility primarily directed against Russia. Anti-Russism and Philo-Turkism, it seemed, were on the point of becoming divorced from one another.

> Hitherto a large part of what is intellectually and morally best in the community has been profoundly agitated by the fear that this country might be ranged on the side of such a State as Turkey. But that dread may now be dismissed. The Turk is no longer a possible ally . . . . . Now that Turkey is out of the way and that this country is face to face with Russia, a large part of the hostility to the Cabinet will vanish.—*T.* Feb. 4th.

> Now that the country has been lifted above the fear of having to fight for Turkey, the hostility of[2] Russia has perceptibly increased.—*T.* Feb. 19th.

It was not merely that the possibility of fighting to protect Turkey against Russia seemed past, but the unwillingness on the part of the Sultan to allow the passage of the English ships

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 143.

[2] *Sic.* Query "to"?

through the Dardanelles went to confirm the suspicion that Turkey and Russia were coming to an agreement behind our back, by which Turkey would be rendered entirely subservient to the Czar. This was the policy which, it seems, now actually found an advocate in Server Pasha.

The view of the situation which Server put in an interview with a special correspondent of the *Daily News* was, that Turkey, "encouraged, misled, *trompé*," by England, had at last thrown herself into the arms of Russia.

> "Say this as coming from Server Pasha, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sublime Porte, word for word as nearly as you can translate it. I have hitherto been a partisan of England, of English policy, of the English alliance. I believed there were ties of sympathy, friendship, and of interest between the two peoples that necessitated an alliance. I believed in England to the extent of compromising myself and my Government. I see that I have been mistaken; that I was deceived, or (correcting himself) that I deceived myself. I now abandon the English alliance. I no longer believe in English policy, the English Government, or the English people. I accept the Russian policy and alliance. I am a partisan of them. I believe in the Russian policy. I am more Russian than the Russians themselves. Say this, please."
>
> [Another of the Turkish envoys added] "We were encouraged to go to war by England, and even to continue the struggle when our better judgment told us we had better make peace on any terms. We would have made a peace before the fall of Plevna that would have satisfied Russia but for the counsels of the English Government. I do not refer to the official notes of Lord Derby. They were explicit and clear. If we believed them we had nothing to hope from England; but it is not official notes diplomatists believe in most. It is 'officious' notes. It is words whispered in the ear. It was the private conversation of Lord Beaconsfield with Musurus Pasha, of Mr. Layard with Server Pasha and with the Sultan, that led us on and deceived us. It was to this his Excellency Server Pasha referred when he spoke to you about his being deceived just now. . . . . Musurus Pasha represents Lord Beaconsfield's language to him in private as almost as strong, though far more cautiously expressed than that of Mr. Layard. Server Pasha has documents which will prove beyond doubt all I say, and which will be published after the war. It has been our destruction. It has been the ruin of Turkey. *C'est triste! C'est triste!*"—*Spl. Correspondent, D. N.* Feb. 7th.

The statements reported by the *Daily News* correspondent were alluded to in the House of Commons on Feb. 7th at the very crisis of the parliamentary contest. Sir Stafford Northcote read a

communication from the Premier in which he wrote, "I have only to say that the statement is an infamous fabrication."

> Server Pasha is understood to have promised to give a formal public disavowal of the statements respecting Mr. Layard attributed to him by the correspondent of the *Daily News*. In default of such reparation Mr. Layard will demand from the Porte the dismissal of Server Pasha.—*Reuter's Telegram, D. N.* Feb. 20th.

On Feb. 19th Server Pasha was dismissed, and Safvet Pasha was appointed foreign minister in his stead.

> The dismissal of Server Pasha is everywhere attributed solely to the demand of Mr. Layard. It is no secret that the sentiments attributed by your correspondent at Adrianople to Server Pasha and others, are held by them, and openly declared.—*Constantinople Correspondent, D. N.* Feb. 25th.
>
> Mr. Layard authorises me to say that the denial given to Server Pasha's statement does not touch the authenticity of your Special Correspondent at Adrianople . . . Nobody here, including Mr. Layard, ever doubted the statement forwarded to you by your Special Correspondent.—*Constantinople Correspondent, D. N.* March 6th.
>
> I have no great confidence in Turkish veracity. In giving Server's conversation I made no comments, expressed no opinion as to the truth of his allegation. . . . Server expressed the same ideas to more than one of my colleagues of the English Press, who stated the fact in letters to their respective journals, as may be seen, for instance, in the *Times* and *Pall Mall Gazette*. He not only expressed these ideas—he acted on them. The abandonment of the Buyuk Tchekmedje lines was in pursuance of this policy. . . . . It is evident that Server gave up these lines in a fit of indignation and anger at the deception which he considered had been practised upon him. He determined to accept the idea of a Russian alliance, and wished to put Turkey beyond the possibility of further resistance, even should England come to rescue her, as well as deprive England of a splendid military position in case she should decide finally to fight Russia. His acceptance of the terms of the armistice, the abandonment of the Buyuk Tchekmedje lines, his conversation with me and with other journalists, his openly-expressed sentiments, his manner of resignation, his refusal to sign any retractation, all hang by one thread.—*Spl. Correspondent, D. N.* March 15th.

b. The Treaty of San Stefano. The treaty of peace known as the Treaty of San Stefano was signed on March 3rd.[1]

The salient feature of this treaty was the formation of the

[1] See *Turkey*, xxii. and xxiii. 1878. It was formally communicated to Lord Derby on March 23rd. See Table, *post*, § 10, for comparison with Treaty of Berlin.

"Big Bulgaria." This Bulgaria was to be an autonomous tributary principality with a Christian government and a national militia;—and meanwhile, for about two years it was to be occupied by a Russian army. It extended southwards over the Balkans, including the theatre of the rising and of the atrocities of May 1876, and moreover it comprised a considerable part of Macedonia, reaching to the Ægean from Kavala Bay to the Gulf of Contessa, and again at Salonika.

Other prominent features in the treaty were the cession to Russia of a slice of Armenia comprising Kars and Batoum and the retrocession to Russia of the part, Bessarabia, belonging to Roumania, which had been lost by Russia in 1856. This was to be effected by an exchange between Russia and Roumania of the territory in question for territory in the Dobrudsha which Turkey ceded to Russia as an equivalent for 1,100,000,000 roubles, part of a money indemnity of 1,410,000,000 roubles for which Russia stipulated. Of the other part, 10,000,000 roubles were to be paid as indemnity for losses sustained by Russian subjects and establishments in Turkey on the claims of those interested being audited. The mode of payment and guarantee of the balance—300,000,000 roubles—was to be settled by an understanding between the Governments of Russia and Turkey.[1]

The treaty also provided that the European proposals of the first sitting of the Constantinople Conference should be introduced into Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with any modifications which might be agreed upon between Turkey, Russia, and Austria; that the Organic Law of 1868 should be scrupulously applied in Crete; and that analogous arrangements should be introduced into Epirus, Thessaly, and the other parts of Turkey in Europe for which the treaty provided no special constitution. Moreover, Russia was to have a voice as to the carrying into effect of the new organisation,

It will be remembered that Servia had declared war for the second time against the Porte after the battle of Plevna, and that Roumania and Montenegro were also in arms against Turkey. Although Roumania, Servia, and Montenegro were not formally parties to the Treaty of San Stefano, that instrument must be regarded practically as establishing peace between them and Turkey.[2]

[1] This was left as an outstanding claim.

[2] The Treaty of San Stefano contains a reference to an intended direct treaty between Turkey and Roumania.

It provided for the acknowledgment of their independence, together with some accession of territory for Montenegro, and for Servia. Roumania's right to an indemnity was acknowledged, and Roumania, as we have seen, was to gain territory in the Dobrudsha, but on the other hand was to cede territory to Russia.

Broadly speaking, the Treaty of San Stefano corresponded with the intimation given in the summer of 1877, and with the bases communicated by Count Schouvaloff on January 25th; but in the San Stefano treaty all reference to a revision of the rule of the Straits had dropped out. Nevertheless, it was received with a howl of execration from those who were unwilling or unable to conceive of any curtailment of the Sultan's dominions otherwise than as identical with the extension of a Power inimical to England.

> Anything more monstrous than [the terms of peace] are it is hardly possible to imagine. By this instrument Russia is not content with the annihilation of Turkey in Europe. . . . The new Bulgaria will be a Russian province, the Muscovite outposts will be advanced to the Ægean; and the Black Eagle will cover with his wings the entire tract from the Prüth to the Mediterranean. We say that these articles of conquest trench upon, if they do not break down, every condition in "the charter of our policy" laid before the whole world in Lord Derby's famous despatch of May 6th. Each vital point which we declared ourselves "equally bound and determined to defend" is either openly assailed or covertly undermined; and if we accept such a peace we shall sign away the rights and the heritage of Englishmen.—*D. T.* March 4th.

> Now that the public are in possession of the "Provisional Treaty," its inadmissible character becomes patent to all reasonable Englishmen; and the vast importance of the position taken up by the Government will be plainly discerned. . . . We may take the "Big Bulgaria" defined in the San Stefano document, together with the arrangements designed for its immediate future, as a measure of Russian thoroughness and disdain for other Powers. . . . There is not a single "British interest" reserved under the despatch of May 6th, 1877, which is not directly or indirectly assailed.—*D. T.* March 23rd.

On the other hand, the "violet" party rejoiced in the "Big Bulgaria." Looking broadly at the results which they had all along aimed at, the larger the area emancipated from the Turkish yoke, the better they were pleased. To them it seemed no disadvantage that the new Christian State should be large and strong. On the contrary, the larger and stronger it was, the more likely

they thought it would be to be jealous of its independence, and to constitute an effective barrier to Russia.

> The Duke of Argyll contends [1] that if the forthcoming Congress should end in founding the independence of new Christian provinces, the true ends of the treaties of 1856 will have been secured. Those, therefore, who stand up for the strict maintenance of the treaties ought to welcome such a solution, for this is in the true spirit of the treaties.—*D. N.* March 8th.

However, now that a particular "Solution," worked out in detail, was before the world, some amount of attention was of necessity drawn to those more complex considerations which remained in abeyance as long as the choice was between broadly distinguished "Policies." [2]

There were few of those who scrutinised the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano who did not look upon this annexation of Bessarabia to Russia as a blot.[3]

Again some were anxious about the form in which Russia might claim payment of the balance of the indemnity.[4]

> England would peremptorily forbid any attempt to hypothecate the revenues of Egypt, and thus to make that country the vassal of Russia. She would do so, to speak with perfect frankness, even if Russia and Turkey should combine to enforce such an arrangement. Austria might equally decline to permit the tribute from the new Bulgaria to be deflected to St. Petersburg for the payment of the interest on the indemnity. This country again could not see with indifference payment made by a transfer of the Turkish fleet in the present state of Continental relations. —*T.* March 11th.

The Treaty of San Stefano appeared faulty in two other respects: it incorporated with the new Slav State Greek districts which would be better joined to the Kingdom of Greece, or perhaps, as autonomous provinces; [5] and it gave to Russia too great a part in superintending the emancipation of Bulgaria and the introduction of the new organisation in the other provinces.

> The grand and patent vice of the Russian proposals as at present understood, is that they ignore completely one of the most important elements of the problem. That element is the

[1] Apparently referring to his speech in the House of Lords, in which he contended for the "violet" construction of the Treaty of Paris, *ante*, p. 301.

[2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 179.

[3] See Mr. Gladstone's speech, April 8th, *H. of C.*, *post*, § 7. [4] *Ante*, p. 379.

[5] See Mr. Gladstone's speech, April 8th, *H. of C.* The *D. N.* remarks:—"In Mr. Gladstone's view the proposed extension [of Bulgaria] is much too large. We are by no means prepared to accept this conclusion without much further discussion." —March 25th.

Greek race and the Greek influence. The central point of the Russian scheme is the constitution of a great province of Bulgaria, stretching from the Danube to the Ægean. Neither this country nor, in all probability, Austria is very much concerned with either the size or the precise delimitation of Bulgaria, and it may be hoped we shall keep ourselves as clear as possible of these local and minor details. But there is one consideration involved in them of the most vital and decisive importance. If a Bulgarian and Slav State be created stretching from the Danube to the Ægean, and if it have practically the guarantee of Russian support, the Greeks would be finally shut out not only from the extension of their authority towards Constantinople, but from their legitimate influence in the new province.—*T.* March 14th.

It is impossible to admit the pretension that [Russia] may dictate the limits of the new Bulgaria or the administrative arrangements of the province. As the Government of Bulgaria must be largely Slav, the bounds of it might be so extended as, practically, to crush the hopes of the Greeks. But England, in particular, must charge herself with the protection of Hellenic interests, which, with all the faults of the Greek races, are more favourable than any other to the growth of Western civilisation in the Balkan peninsula. Austria will be careful, on the other hand, that the new province shall not be allowed to prevent a southward expansion of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nor is it less important to examine the administrative arrangements proposed by Russia. They might be so framed as to make Bulgaria little better than a Russian province, or to deprive the Mussulmans of liberty, or to place the Catholic population at the mercy of the bigoted Greek clergy.—*T.* March 11th.

Such considerations as these were not without weight with the "violet" party. On the whole, the attitude which they would have had the English Government adopt towards the Treaty of San Stefano, was that of men friendly to the great emancipation which had been achieved and by no means anxious to shorten the boundaries of the regions withdrawn from Turkish rule, however much they might make it their aim to obtain, by negotiation, the amendment of any of the provisions of the treaty which might appear faulty. These men thought that the best remedy for the faults of the Treaty of San Stefano was to be found in the direction of extending the great emancipation which had been extorted from Turkey, and making it more complete. But taking it at its worst, they could see nothing sufficiently obnoxious in the treaty to justify any threat of war—a war which, as things stood, could hardly have any other result than to make England once more the champion of Turkey, and of Turkey's claims to have the emancipated Provincials once more placed beneath her yoke.

c. The English Government poses as the Champion of Hellenism. —At this juncture it seemed that a new reconciliation between the Government and the advocates of the "violet" policy was about to be effected on the ground of an accord in the application of that policy to the case of the Greek provinces of Turkey.

The Greeks, both of the provinces and of the kingdom, had been, as has been mentioned,[1] eager to profit by the opportunity of freeing the provinces, which was afforded by the pre-occupation of Turkey with her Russian foe.

Lord Derby, on the other hand, was urgent to counsel the Greeks to maintain a prudent attitude, and to warn them not to alienate sympathy by raising insurrectionary movements.

In the summer of 1877 a sort of bargain was struck, and an understanding arrived at to the effect that Greece should not, on the plea that no insurrection having taken place there was no question to be raised, be denied a *locus standi* to urge the claims of the Hellenic provinces.[2]

Lord Derby accordingly on March 9th intimated that he would signify to the other Powers his opinion that Greece was fairly entitled to be represented at the Congress which had been convened at Berlin.[3]

For England to constitute herself the champion of the subject Greek populations might indeed bear the aspect of an anti-Russian policy, from the point of view of those who would regard such an attitude as a mere counterblast to Russian championship of the Slavs. But none the less on that account would it be strictly a development of the policy connected with the anti-Turkish "view," many of the factors of which, it will be remembered, were largely tinged with jealousy and suspicion of Russia.[4]

The purport of Lord Derby's despatch of March 9th was at once made public, and the announcement was hailed with acclamation.

> No decision at once so patriotic and so far-seeing has been taken by the Cabinet for many a day.—*T.* March 11th.
>
> [It is the most satisfactory step taken by the Government since the beginning of the war.] The official confirmation in both Houses last night was received with cheers, which represent, we believe, the feeling of the country.—*D. N.* March 13th.

[1] *Ante*, p. 349.

[2] *Turkey*, xix. 1878.

[3] *Turkey*, xx. 1878, No. 2. Extracts from the Blue Books xix. and xx. appeared in the newspapers of March 19th, 1878.

[4] *Ante*, Part II. table. See vol. i. p 185.

A note of disapproval was raised by those who adhered to the policy of supporting and strengthening Turkey, a policy which for the moment seemed to have fallen into abeyance.

> From a notice given in the House of Commons last night by Sir Robert Peel, in which the "known opinions" of Lord Lyons as friendly to Greece were referred to as disqualifying him for representing his country at the Congress, it is to be inferred that its author considers it a disadvantage for a Government to be represented by a Plenipotentiary who agrees with its policy. Lord Lyons, Sir Robert Peel fears, will be in danger of "provoking disorders" at the green table of the Congress.—*D. N.* March 13th.

> The episode of the debate which Sir Robert Peel contrived to force on the House at a late hour had little in it that was new or instructive. Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice described it fairly when he said it was chiefly remarkable because it uttered the dying groan of the old philo-Turk party.—*D. N.* March 15th.

For a few days it was proclaimed with some show of confidence that the old policy of supporting Turkey had been finally abandoned, and that a new departure had been taken.

Once more it seemed that there was room for a reconciliation between Public Opinion and the Government, based on the tardy conversion of the latter to a "violet" policy. The part which England would play in the coming negotiations began to be anticipated with some amount of complacency.

> [Russia] has drawn the main lines of the settlement, and the amendments of the Congress would well leave her in possession of substantial advantages. At all events, the other Powers would seek to combat none of the objects for which Russia declared that she went to war. She fought, she said, to liberate the Bulgarians, and they are liberated. No Government would dream of again putting them under the yoke of the Porte. But neither will any Government consent to put them under the yoke of Russia. It may be found, indeed, that this country would sanction a greater departure from the old state of things than Russia herself. . . . Partially, the requisite safeguard may be found in a careful protection of the minority as well as the majority in Bulgaria. Partially, it might be attained by an Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another security for the future may be found in the direction indicated by the support which our Government is giving to Greece.—*T.* March 11th.

> For good or evil the military power of the Porte is gone. For good or evil its authority over Bulgaria is gone. . . . It would be far better for Europe, and especially for England, to face the fact that the work of the Congress must be essentially constructive. The boldest policy will be found the safest. As the

Porte has ceased to be a barrier against Russia, it is the business of Europe to find another. . . . The significance of [Lord Derby's proposal with regard to Greece] was marked in the House of Commons last night by the loud cheers which on both sides greeted the confirmation of the announcement we made yesterday morning. At last both parties have reached ground on which they can heartily work together. . . . But it would be useless to hide the fact that the proposal to let Greece join the Congress is an immense departure from the old traditions of England. It means that the Turks have ceased to furnish the elements of a State sufficiently large and stable to preserve peace. It means that the Christian majority in Epirus, Thessaly, and Crete have as good right to self-government as the Christian majority in Bulgaria.—*T.* Mar. 12th.

It may be taken as a sign that the Government is beginning to see that the course of conciliating and befriending the growing nations of the East is the true one for English policy to take.—*D. N.* Mar. 12th.

[It] has been welcomed by the country as the first act in pursuance of a new policy in the affairs of south-eastern Europe. More than anything which Ministers had previously done, it shows that they have broken away from the bondage of vain and mischievous traditions, and are determined to shape their course by the facts of the day.—*D. N.* Mar. 13th.

We are continually being told that the new Principality of Bulgaria will be and must be under Russian domination until the pretence of keeping up its existence as a separate State is abandoned, and it is incorporated with Russia. . . . The result predicted can only happen by the grossest mismanagement on the part of European Governments. . . . If Lord Derby's proposal is worth anything it means that England desires to be the friend of the Christian States of Eastern Europe, so far as they aspire to freedom and self-government. Such an announcement, made in the most practical of forms, immediately affects Greece to-day; but it concerns all the Christian peoples of the East. The policy it foreshadows is not that of playing off one State against another, as Greece against Bulgaria, but that of awakening in them all a spirit of independence and resistance to foreign encroachment.—*D. N.* Mar. 13th.

It is essential that Greece be given every opportunity for urging her plea for a rectification of frontier, and that Roumania be heard in detail against the unwarrantable claim of Russia for the annexation of Bessarabia. The support of England in both these points may, we trust, be reckoned on by the Hellenic kingdom and the Roumanian Principality.—*D. N.* Mar. 18th.

But though sanguine men might hope that the English Government had at last determined to adopt such an attitude towards the treaty of San Stefano as would commend itself to the "violet" party, the faint indication afforded by Lord Derby's

proposal in favour of Greece was speedily eclipsed by the evidences of a contrary leaning to be found in the manifestly hostile spirit in which the English Government insisted on the "submission of the treaty.[1] The importance of the controversy on this point began to attract attention soon after the time when attention was drawn to the attitude of the Government with respect to Greece; and the hopes excited by the apparently Hellenic policy of Lord Derby's despatch were speedily effaced.

> We fear the object of the English Government in making this suggestion [with respect to Greece] has been somewhat exaggerated by public opinion. . . . The Sultan would thus lose a further amount of territory if he listened to the proposals of Greece at the same time that he assented to the proposals of Russia. But a solution might be found, satisfying at once the Sublime Porte, Greece, and Bulgaria proper, though General Ignatieff would have to remodel his ethnographical map. While Greece annexed Thessaly, Macedonia, and that south-western portion of Roumelia in which is to be found a large Hellenic population, and while Bulgaria was carried down to its proper boundary at the Balkans, the Sublime Porte might retain its authority up to the foot of those mountains, at the same time giving substantial guarantees for the good government of the province thus rescued for it. We are not insensible to the difficulties attending such a course; for any settlement of the Eastern Question must be surrounded with difficulties. But it can scarcely be the wish of this country, or of Austria, to provoke the hostility of Turkey and to drive it still further into the arms or Russia. If this is to be avoided the claims of Greece must not permit us altogether to overlook the claims of Turkey.—*St.* Mar. 18th.

It seems indeed as if the English Government were not unwilling at this juncture to serve themselves of Greek jealousy of the Slavs, as a pretext, or a lever, for restricting in favour of Turkey the extension to be given to the emancipated province.

It might serve their purpose to countenance Hellenism as a counterblast to the "Big Bulgaria"; but when their purpose was effected it was explained that nothing was further from their thoughts than to seek to extend the limits of the provinces which were to be emancipated from Turkey.[2]

Just as in the Conference at Constantinople, a perfunctory support had been given by the English Government to the measure of emancipation which they had then proposed, so only a per-

[1] *Post*, § 6.
[2] By Lord Beaconsfield at Berlin. *Post*, § 10.

functory support, it seems, was given to the claims of Greece by the English Government in the Congress at Berlin.[1]

> Greece has a future, and that cannot be said of every country; and I would therefore say to Greece what I would say to individuals in like circumstances, Learn to be patient.—*Lord Beaconsfield, H. of L.* July 18th.

d. The Negroponte Affair.—The mutual jealousies and conflicting claims of the Christian population of the Balkan peninsula constituted, as the advocates of the "violet" policy were forced to recognise, a difficulty in the way of working out their policy to a satisfactory solution; but whereas the jealousy between Greek and Bulgarian from the point of view of the "red" policy not only afforded one reason the more why the Turkish yoke should be maintained but might itself on occasion serve a useful turn—from the "violet" point of view it was to be deprecated and kept in subordination to the great end of achieving the emancipation of both alike. This was the attitude counselled by Mr. Gladstone in two letters which he addressed, at an early stage of the controversy, to a Greek gentleman (but a Turkish subject) named Negroponte. On this correspondence a charge was afterwards based against Mr. Gladstone that he had incited the Greeks to an attack upon Turkey, a charge which gave rise to a good deal of heated feeling, a voluminous diplomatic correspondence, and a debate in Parliament.[2]

[1] See *post*, § 10, as to the treatment of the Greek question at the Congress, and the tardy and partial realisation, after Mr. Gladstone had succeeded to power, of the vague hopes held out.

[2] See *Turkey*, x. and xviii. 1878.

The *Daily Telegraph* of Aug. 28th, 1877, published a statement from its correspondent at Constantinople to the effect that Mr. Gladstone had advised the Greeks to unite with the Slavs in attacking Turkey.

Mr. Gladstone addressed a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* on Sept. 25th, in which, while expressing his disapproval of those who gratuitously advise others to go to war while they sit at home at ease, he explained that his letter had been written at the time of the Conference, and that it referred to sympathy and moral support. He added:—"There is some Polonius behind the curtain, and I call on him to come out."

Thereupon (Oct. 29th) Mr. Layard wrote a despatch in which he explained that M. Negroponte had told him of the first letter, describing it as urging the Greeks to join the Slavs and throw off the Turkish yoke. The letter was not shown him, or he should have seen that its contents were misrepresented.

The second letter was shown Mr. Layard by a correspondent of the *Times*. Mr. Layard observed that, although there was not much in it, it might be very mischievous, and that Mr. Gladstone did not understand the true feelings of the two races, which would rather fight than unite.

Mr. Layard went on to explain that the matter had, in fact, at his suggestion been mentioned to the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*.

On March 12th, 1878, Mr. Evelyn Ashley brought forward a motion declaring

> [Mr. Gladstone's] denial, which appeared in our columns on the 15th of September last, had appended to it a copy in full of his first letter to Mr. Negroponte. This document was on the face of it perfectly harmless. There was not one word in it of any attack upon the Turks. It recognised the fact that the Christian subjects of the Porte had been oppressed, and suggested as a remedy "*le développement des libertés locales de toute province prouvé d'être souffrante.*" As for the manner in which this privilege was to be obtained, "*je ne peux pas,*" says Mr. Gladstone, "*louer ni Grecs qui refusent leur concours moral aux Slavs, ni Slavs qui le refusent aux Grecs.*" . . . We published a copy of [the second letter] on the 8th inst. From the beginning to the end there is not one word that can be twisted into a meaning that would bear out the charge based upon it. It just explains that the object of the first letter was to insist upon the policy and duty of treating the Christian cause as one in the face of the Ottoman power and influence, and of adjourning to a future juncture the settlement of the inter-Christian controversies, and expresses regret that it has not been thought right to act upon this principle, but upon the opposite one.—*T.* Feb. 11th.

The correspondence indicates on the part of Mr. Gladstone his adherence to the contention that the differences between the various Christian populations of the Balkans were questions altogether subordinate in importance to the question of their subjection to the Turkish power. It is significant to notice the contrast which this affords to the position of the Government, which seemed based on a contrary estimate of the relative importance of the two classes of questions.

e. The Turks turn Recalcitrant.—The fall of Server[1] perhaps marks the abandonment by the Porte of the policy of leaning on Russia, and the revival of the idea that it might after all be possible that England should come to their aid.

At all events, soon after Server's dismissal the Turks began to interpose obstacles and delays, and to offer a passive resistance to the carrying out of the provisions of the preliminaries of peace, as if hoping that the necessity of doing so might yet be avoided. Moreover provocative rumours once more became rife in Constantinople.

> The *Agence Russe* notes that the Turks have become more recalcitrant—*Cited in D.N.* Feb. 20th.

> There is evidently a preconceived plan for working on English public opinion, and at the same time for alarming the Russians,

that the House viewed with regret the part taken in the matter by Mr. Layard, which was rejected by 206 against 132.

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted that the ambassador's conduct was indiscreet, and such an admission on his part means a good deal."—*T.* March 13th.

[1] *Ante*, p. 378.

causing them to lose their coolness, and inducing them to take some precautionary measures that may be interpreted as warlike acts. There are besides strange, inexplicable movements going on in the Turkish army—marching, counter-marching, moving of troops from point to point, incessant drilling, &c., that seem purposely intended to alarm the Russians, and induce them to take some warlike step. Fortunately the plan has not succeeded so far.—*Special Correspondent, D. N.* Feb. 27th.

The wholly unlooked-for delay in signing the conditions of peace is the all-absorbing question of the moment, and is perplexing everybody except a few principal movers behind the scenes, who themselves, however, profess the same perplexity. . . . Pera is always full of canards and contradictions, but they were never so rife as at the present moment. . . . Diametrically opposite statements are being made by responsible officials of the highest rank on both sides. Turkish Ministers, for instance, positively declare that Russia has demanded the surrender of the Turkish ironclads and the expulsion of the Mussulman population from Bulgaria. Russian officials of the highest rank declare no less positively that these demands were never made. . . . The Turks, or, at least, a certain party among the Turks, may hope that some of the conditions will give sufficient offence and alarm to the other Powers to bring about a European intervention. We have still, moreover, a foreign war party here agitating for an armed intervention, and it is believed to be headed by the English ambassador, to whose whole policy and aspirations the acceptance of the Russian conditions would give a fatal blow. . . . [The English public cannot be too much on its guard against statements about the conduct and designs of the Russians calculated to increase the anti-Russian sentiment of the English people.] The strong anti-Russian and philo-Turk prejudices of the English ambassador and his constitutional incapacity to accept evidence which goes against his policy or to reject evidence which tells for it make him peculiarly liable to this self-deception. It would be extremely hazardous to take immediate and important action on any information furnished by him until confirmed by other sources. Quite recently he sent some despatches of the most important and critical character, which, though correct in the letter, gave an incorrect impression of the actual state of affairs. [One mentioned the receipt of a telegram from Kezanlik in twelve hours without adding that the prompt delivery was wholly exceptional, thus giving a dangerously erroneous impression of the ease of communication between Constantinople and the Russian headquarters. The second was the despatch which changed the whole aspect of the debate on the vote of credit, though there were correspondents who at the same time telegraphed home to warn the public that the Russian advance might be no violation of the armistice as the conditions were not then known.] The situation is just now so critical that one false step might bring on war between Russia and England, and, whether such a war be or

be not desirable, it cannot be desirable that we should be precipitated into it by incorrect information, however honest and patriotic the motives with which it is volunteered.—*Constantinople Correspondent, T.* Feb. 28th.

The demon of lies seems to be let loose in Constantinople. It is impossible for one man to investigate half the alarming and mischievous rumours set afloat and telegraphed to England with the cynically avowed object of exciting public opinion, and making war inevitable.—*Special Correspondent, D. N.* Mar. 26th.

There is not the slightest evidence of any intention on the part of the Russians to violate the engagement they have made in any way. This is acknowledged by everybody except those who are blindly determined on bringing about war at any hazard by any means, however reprehensible. This is acknowledged by one correspondent of a leading paper here, who is violently anti-Russian in views, his honesty contrasting forcibly with the conduct of another well-known correspondent, who openly and cynically avows that he will use any report that may tend to bring about war, without inquiring into its truth or caring for its truth.—*Special Correspondent, D. N.* March 27th.

We fear that there are not a few among us who cling to the hope that England may even yet be drawn into a war with Russia. . . . There is reason to fear that we are face to face with a conspiracy, of which the British ambassador at Constantinople is certainly not the accomplice, but of which he too probably is the dupe, to force on a war between England and Russia. . . . Falsehoods manufactured expressly for the irritation of English feeling are transmitted eagerly and incessantly. A lying rumour, sedulously propagated, brought the British Fleet to Prince's Islands, and a sinister intrigue has prevented the embarkation of the Russian troops. The same instrumentalities are keeping the army of the Czar and the ships of the Queen in close neighbourhood in the hope that accident may bring about a collision. Pains are being taken by exaggerations of the Russian demands to delay and ultimately to prevent the meeting of the Congress. Our correspondent at Berlin states that opinion in that capital holds that this design is already successful; and a contest between England and Russia for the Turkish alliance is regarded as the next stage of the controversy. It is difficult to attribute criminal lunacy of this kind to English statesmen. An Anglo-Turkish alliance would have no meaning except as a preparation for war.—*D. N.* March 26th.

Meanwhile it very soon became apparent that philo-Turkism was by no means obsolete. The dissociation between philo-Turkism and anti-Russism had been only incipient, and the policy of rescuing for Turkey as much as might be rescued revived once more.

It is in the recollection of everybody that all the principal members of the Government, Lord Beaconsfield alone excepted,

were at one time as earnest as any member of the Opposition could be in declaring that the maintenance of the Turkish Empire intact in Europe had ceased to be a part of the policy of England. We do Lord Beaconsfield the justice to say that so far as we can remember he never committed himself to any such declaration. He has been at least consistent. He always, for some mysterious reason, admired the Turks, and he always maintained that the great business of England was to uphold them. . . . During the greater part of the past two years the word of order amongst Her Majesty's Ministers and their supporters was that the Government had no intention of lifting a hand for the purpose of supporting or restoring Turkey. The very suggestion that the Government had any purpose of the kind was commonly resented as an insult and a calumny. It was a thing devised by the enemy, a reckless Radical accusation sent abroad with the deliberate purpose of doing harm to the Government. We fear we see indications just now that this wholesome state of feeling among members of the Government is undergoing a change. Lord Salisbury's despatch, Mr. Hardy's speech, even the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in closing the debate on Tuesday, were full of suggestions which seemed to say that England is, after all, bound to feel a close interest in Turkey for Turkey's own sake. . . . Lord Salisbury, Mr. Hardy, and even the Chancellor of the Exchequer are very much shocked at the proposed extension of Bulgaria. Now we should greatly object to a new Bulgaria which absorbed unduly Hellenic populations; and we should greatly object to a new Bulgaria which was so organised and manipulated as to become a Russian instead of a Turkish province. But when we are asked if we did not hold up our hands and eyes in amazement when we saw the extent assigned on the map to the proposed Bulgaria of the future, we must only answer that if it be a genuine Bulgaria its size would not shock us in the least. What interest has England in making the new Bulgaria very small?—*D. N.* April 12th.

Rumour, it seems, fixes upon the stipulations respecting Bulgaria and Batoum as those which will form the chief subject of contention between our own Government and the Russians, and in this instance it is probably guided by a sure instinct. . . . The proposed principality would be an enormous injustice to other Powers and interests, and it could only be regarded, as our Vienna correspondent this morning expresses it, as the last stage in a Russian advance on Constantinople.—*T.* May 8th.

Not a few of the warmest admirers of the Government are speaking and writing as if the only object of the English people was to see the Treaty of San Stefano so cut down at the Congress as to punish the pretensions and rebuke the pride of Russia. The whole business of the Congress, according to this familiar and confident doctrine, is to hold the ground for a diplomatic duel between England and Russia. The triumph for England will be if Russia is anyhow brought to the earth.—*D. N.* June 11th.

§ 6. *Submitting the Treaty.*

The attitude of the English Government with regard to the point of form involved in the negotiations affords a striking contrast to the "Isolation tempered by British Interests" of the Conditional Neutrality. Then they seemed to repudiate all the responsibilities of a member of the European system. Now, on the other hand, the English Government proclaimed a policy which not only presupposed their own membership of the European system, but pushed the theory of the rights and obligations of the States which constitute it, to a point which, though possibly calculated to improve international relations if it could be firmly established, went far beyond anything that seems as yet to be recognised as International Law. It is hard, too, to reconcile the doctrine on which the English Ministry now insisted, with their own proceedings at a later stage, when, the preliminary difficulty having been got over, they proceeded to deal with the particular matters in controversy by way of secret agreements with Russia and Turkey respectively.[1]

The English Government now contended that the principle embodied in the protocol of the Treaty of London[2] applied to the changes sought to be introduced by the Treaty of San Stefano, notwithstanding the circumstance that Russia, finding the former state of things intolerable, and failing to obtain the necessary modifications by "means of an amicable arrangement," had declared war to obtain them. This being the position which the English Government determined to assume, on January 14th Lord Derby telegraphed to St. Petersburg that any treaty between the belligerents affecting the treaties of 1856 and 1871 must be an European treaty, and would not be valid without the assent of the Powers who were parties to those treaties.[3] Shortly afterwards the Home Secretary promulgated the doctrine in the House of Commons.

> Another difficulty has arisen. I suppose we shall all agree that no change of treaty is to be made without the assent of those Powers that signed the treaty. I will now read the protocol of the Treaty of London in order to refresh the memory of the right hon. gentlemen opposite.

[1] *Post*, §§ 9 and 11.
[2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 48.
[3] *Turkey*, iii. 1878, No. 6. Contents given in London newspapers of Jan. 31st, 1878.

> Let us take that as one of the bases on which we are to go, and when we are dealing with these matters let it be understood that treaties to which we are parties are not to be altered without our consent.—*Mr. Cross, H. of C.* Jan. 31st.

The negotiations on this point proceeded through March. The English Government laid down

> that they must distinctly understand before they can enter into Congress that every article in the treaty between Russia and Turkey will be placed before the Congress, not necessarily for acceptance, but in order that it may be considered what articles require acceptance or concurrence by the several Powers, and what do not.—*Turkey*, XXIV. 1878, No. 8.

Prince Gortschakoff engaged

> that the Preliminary Treaty of Peace concluded between Russia and Turkey shall be textually communicated to the Great Powers before the meeting of the Congress, and that in the Congress itself each Power will have the full liberty of its appreciations and of its actions.—*Ibid.* No. 17.

This was coupled with an intimation from Prince Gortschakoff

> that of course he could not impose silence on any member of the Congress, but he could only accept a discussion on those portions of the treaty which affected European interests.—*Ibid.* No. 14.

The English Government not finding these explanations sufficient, Lord Derby was informed by the Russian ambassador on March 19th

> that he was charged to represent to Her Majesty's Government that the Treaty of Peace concluded between Russia and Turkey, the only one which existed, for there was no secret engagement, would be communicated to the Government of the Queen in its entirety, and long before ('*bien avant*') the assembling of the Congress. The Government of the Queen, in like manner as the other Great Powers, reserved to themselves at the Congress their full liberty of appreciation and action. This same liberty, which she did not dispute to others, Russia claimed for herself. Now, it would be to restrict her, if, alone among all the Powers, Russia contracted a preliminary engagement.—*Turkey*, XXV. 1878.[1]

On the 21st Lord Derby replied that Her Majesty's Government could not recede from the position already defined by them. On the 26th Count Schouvaloff announced that the Russian Government had arrived at a similar determination. He added, however, a definition of the meaning which the Russian Cabinet attached to the term "liberty of appreciation and action."

[1] See also XXIV. No. 15.

> It leaves to the other Powers the liberty of raising such questions at the Congress as they might think it fit to discuss, and reserves to itself the liberty of accepting or not accepting the discussion of these questions.—*Turkey*, XXIV. 1878, No. 19.

The negotiations up to this point were recapitulated in Lord Salisbury's despatch of April 1st,[1] which was published in the newspapers of the next morning, and in that despatch Lord Salisbury added—

> Her Majesty's Government deeply regret the decision which the Russian Government have thus announced.

Thus affairs had come to a deadlock on the point of form.

Now, whether or not Russia had been justified in resorting to war to obtain a modification of the state of things set up by the Treaty of Paris (a point on which Russia could appeal to the attitude of all the European Powers in the Conference at Constantinople, although Lord Derby, it is true, had steadily refused to admit the justification), it would seem, at all events from the point of view of the doctrine as to validity of treaties which has been suggested,[2] somewhat late in the day for other Powers now to insist upon the mere plea of the "invalidity" of any variation of the Treaty of 1856, as distinguished from their competency to object to any new provisions which might be prejudicial to their interests. This, however, was the position which the English Government now took up, and the prospects of peace were once more overshadowed.

This new aspect of the matter began to attract attention about the middle of March.

> In respect to the view which the Government took of these preliminary bases, Lord Derby gave one piece of information which may prove of importance. In a despatch which has already been published,[3] the Government have stated that they are not prepared to recognise as valid any changes which may have been made by virtue of the Russo-Turkish Treaty until these changes have received the assent of the Conference.—*T.* March 9th.

At this juncture, Mr. Courtney attempted to raise a discussion in the House of Commons on the doctrine of International Law involved, and argued the general principle strenuously.[4]

> *Mr. Courtney* continued:—It was quite plain what was the application of all this. . . . The reason why he had brought this

[1] *Post*, § 7, *b*.
[2] *Ante*, Part II. vol. i. p. 46.
[3] The reference appears to be to the despatch of Jan. 14th, *ante*, p. 392.
[4] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 49.

matter forward at this crisis was not to pass judgment on the conduct of the Government, but to elicit a few words from the Government which might be of much use now in dispelling erroneous views which were expressed in the public press in a way irritating to the public mind of England. As to the Congress, they knew well the majority of voices would not rule. The words of Count Schouvaloff, that Russia "reserved to herself the liberty of accepting or not accepting the discussion of the questions" raised at the Conference, were consistent with International Law, but they had been misinterpreted in some public prints. One, for example, said "Russia puts a veto on the Conference;" another, that Russia denied to the Powers assembled at the Conference cognizance of the Treaty of San Stefano. She did not do so. What she did say was, in effect, that she was not bound to submit the treaty to the concurrence of all the Powers, but was ready to consider the Congress as a consultative body and not a tribunal. This subject had been so freely discussed in the press that what he had submitted to the House could not be productive of mischief to Her Majesty's Government or to the interests of the country.

Sir Stafford Northcote said he did not complain of the tone or of the general tenour of the remarks of the hon. member. There was much he had said in which he was inclined to concur, but on some points he thought that when the hon. gentleman had time to consider the correspondence which would soon be laid on the table he would see that he had not quite appreciated the position or views of Her Majesty's Government.—*H. of C.* March 29th.

The subject was again raised on April 5th.

Mr. Gladstone:—I think it is a duty to consider the entire treaty at the Congress; but I also apprehend that it is by international usage, which constitutes the law—and there is no other law in the case—the absolute right of every Power meeting at the Congress to withdraw from that Congress at such time as it shall think fit. That is a right which I understand to be claimed by Her Majesty's Government. I think if so it is a just claim, and it is a matter of the utmost importance to know whether they have allowed to Russia a right which they so claim for themselves. . . . If the real meaning of Her Majesty's Government is that Russia has no right to withdraw the treaty, or any part of the treaty, from the judgment of the Congress, that I conceive to be a proposition to which it is impossible to demur. But if it be a proposition that Russia has no right to withhold herself from the deliberations of the Congress, that is a proposition which I apprehend would constitute a deviation from the general practice of those assemblies. . . . I can conceive of cases in which it would be right either for the Government of Russia or for the Government of Great Britain to refuse to take any part in a discussion that might be raised at the Congress. . . . Suppose it were proposed at the Congress that the Congress should make over to Russia jointly with Turkey the regulation of the passage

of vessels of war through the Straits. I can conceive it to be very possible, and indeed not improbable, that the British Government would entirely decline to enter upon that discussion. . . . I can conceive that the Government may take another view—they may conceive that it may be desirable that all discussions whatever should be permitted, and that no Power should exercise the liberty of withdrawal except after discussion. I know not whether that is so or not. . . . If there is that limitation of the liberty of withdrawal, I should hope the view of Her Majesty's Government is that the limitation must apply to all alike. Even then I will venture to add a single observation, and it is this, that such a limitation of the usual privileges of Congresses could hardly be arranged between two of the Powers.

Sir Stafford Northcote:—All that we have done is to express a wish and to make it a condition of our entering the Congress, that it should be clearly understood that the whole of the Treaty of San Stefano, the whole of the treaty between Turkey and Russia, should be submitted to the Congress for its consideration. I understand my right hon. friend himself to admit that is a perfectly legitimate claim. I understand that he considers that the Congress could not properly do its work unless every article of that treaty was to be considered in its relation to other treaties. That is all we desire to understand, and we have endeavoured to ascertain whether it would be so. We find from the correspondence which has passed that the claim which we have made that before entering the Congress we should understand that every article should be submitted to the Congress, is a claim which the Government of Russia is not willing to admit. That is the whole position; and I really think that we should be not only losing time, but actually endangering the settlement of these questions if I were to attempt to follow my right hon. friend into the discussion which he has raised.—*H. of C.* April 5th.

But in spite of Sir Stafford Northcote's language, it appears that the contention of the English Government went far beyond the claim that the Powers should be duly informed of the purport of every article of the treaty, so that each one would have the opportunity, whatever might be the result of so doing, of raising any points arising out of it. The shape in which the claims of the English Government were commonly stated by their supporters (and indeed Lord Derby's despatch of January 14th gave colour to it) was that without the express sanction of the signatories of the Treaty of Paris the new arrangement was "invalid."[1]

We hear of "the peace that is no peace," and how the compact of San Stefano, which Russia refused to submit to the Powers in

[1] *Ante*, p. 392.

Congress, was rendered "null and void"[1] through the wise firmness of this country.

The English Government, in their zeal for the inviolability of treaties, now refused to enter the Congress (which alone, as they contended, could give validity to the new treaty) until a certain condition, spoken of as "submitting the treaty," had been fulfilled.

It is a little difficult to understand precisely what the "submission" might consist in; and the difficulty is not removed by the proceeding which the English Government finally accepted as meeting their requirements.

Indeed it seemed to be regarded as some magical rite, for the due performance of which, by some one (it did not matter much by whom), England, as high priestess of International Law, had made herself responsible.

> If it be true that Germany has undertaken to submit the Treaty of San Stefano to the Powers in the form required by England there should be no further hindrance in the way of a Congress.—*St.* May 4th.

The text of the treaty had in fact been officially communicated. Prince Gortschakoff admitted that the Powers would have the liberty of raising at the Congress such questions as they might think fit, and on the other hand Lord Derby did not ask for an engagement that Russia should bind herself to accept the decision of the majority in the Congress on such points as should be discussed. The distinction between a breaking up of the Congress because Russia should refuse to entertain some question of modifying one of the terms of her Treaty of San Stefano, and a breaking up of the Congress because Russia should refuse to accept a modification desired by the Congress after discussion, is a fine one; but it appears that Lord Derby thought it indispensable to obtain from Russia a guarantee against the first risk, while leaving it open to her to bring about the second.

Meanwhile the Ministerial organs generally (in which category we must now include the *Times*) insisted that the English Government was standing forward as the champion of the faith of treaties and of public law. A position so respectable conciliated some amount of Public Opinion, and tended at once to strengthen

[1] The latter expression occurs in the *Standard* of March 29th. If I recollect right the former occurred in the *Daily Telegraph* more than once.

the Government, and still further to embarrass those who at this time were striving to avert what now once more seemed the imminent war.

> It is to be feared that by large classes, both here and in St. Petersburg, the possibility of war is contemplated with ominous and inexcusable readiness. . . . We are bound, therefore, to inquire with the utmost patience whether the preliminary requirement which we have made, and to which Russia still demurs, deserves the weight which is laid upon it. The more maturely, however, that question is considered the more justifiable, or rather the more imperative, will the requirement of our Government appear. . . . Under the Russian conditions it would be for the Congress to decide whether or not any given clause of the treaty shall be taken as within the scope of its deliberations. On the English plan this preliminary point would be settled, and any plenipotentiary would be able at once to discuss the merits of any clause. . . . But we are disposed to think there is a still more important consideration at issue—a consideration which has a bearing on nothing less than the whole future civilisation of Europe. . . . Russia approaches this question as a successful belligerent. England and Europe approach the question as signatories to a treaty which Russia—whether with or without justifiable excuse—has violated. It will be a fair question for the Congress to consider how far such justification exists, and how far the changes which Russia has established by force ought to be recognised. But we take our stand upon the existing treaty, and by virtue of this we are bound to maintain that results attained in violation of it are *ipso facto* within the cognisance of each of the Powers who made themselves responsible for its fulfilment. . . . The question, thus viewed, has, as we have said, an importance far beyond even the momentous interests of the present crisis. The one hope of statesmen for the future peace of the world must be founded upon the development of a system of public law, and upon the maintenance and increase of the authority of treaties. . . . If any check is to be put upon this ruinous race in military and naval preparations, it can only be by gradually establishing a system of public law which will control national disputes as domestic law controls private quarrels. Every instance of respect paid to treaties is a gain to the world, and every instance of disrespect to them is an incalculable injury. For this reason above all others it is the duty of our Government, and of other European Governments, to maintain, as a matter of principle, that the whole treaty between Russia and Turkey is within the cognisance of a Congress of Powers which assemble as parties to the latest international compact on the subject.—*T.* March 19th.

This demand is so reasonable in itself that it was no sooner announced than it received the approval of the nation. . . . It is said by those whose statements of the Russian admissions we have just reproduced that there is still something wanting on the part

of the Imperial Government, which has not "formally submitted" the treaty to the Congress. We presume that the distinction between what Russia has and what she has not done is apprehended by its authors; but it is one of great subtilty. If Russia places the treaty in the hands of the Powers and declares herself desirous of meeting them in a Congress to discuss its clauses, what more would she do if she "formally submitted" it? . . . The extreme tenuity of the objections raised to the basis which already exists for the meeting of the Congress encourages the hope that no serious obstacle is likely much longer to delay that event.—*D. N.* Mar. 20th.

Russia declines to lay the treaty on the table. That is a very strange piece of reticence. . . . There is but one rational explanation of her attitude, and it is that she shrinks from making an admission which the communication of the treaty might be held to imply. If she were to lay it on the table, the Powers might say that she had thus invited the judgment of Europe on every part of it, and even admitted their right to pronounce a decision. [But she would] not pledge herself to let the other Powers be the final judges of what interests were hers, and what were theirs. To do so would be to divest herself of her independence. . . . It is in vain, therefore, for Russia to contend that she would abandon the legitimate freedom of an independent Power if she were to lay the treaty on the table of the Congress. She would not, and she could not, divest herself of that liberty. Her refusal, or even her unwillingness, to comply with the demand of this country casts a reproach on the acuteness of her diplomacy.—*T.* Mar. 21st.[1]

It is impossible to deny or to exaggerate the gravity of the situation. That war between England and Russia should be talked of as possible in present circumstances is a satire, we will not say upon Christianity and humanity, but upon diplomacy and common sense. The dispute which has arisen is one rather of form and of punctilio than of substance. Practically the whole of the treaty is submitted by Russia to discussion in Congress, although there is a reservation in the manner in which this is done. This reservation is, we believe, unnecessary; and the difficulty might be removed if there were a spirit of courtesy and concession on both sides in matters of only secondary importance. —*D. N.* Mar. 27th.

The hope that the Congress will meet has now almost vanished. The disagreement between our own Government and that of Russia seems to be insuperable. At the same time it does not become easier to see the exact difficulty which Russia believes to stand in her way.—*T.* Mar. 28th.

Russia will do anything rather than admit that any part of the barrier of treaty law erected against her in 1856 is still standing. She will consent to no course and accept no language

[1] See *post*, p. 402, for further extract from the same article.

which implies that those instruments are even formally in force; on the other hand, there is no concession which she does not profess herself ready to make, and there is no expedient which she is not ready to adopt, provided only that she is not compelled to acknowledge the validity of the existing treaty law of Europe, and provided that she is allowed to get the Treaty of San Stefano recognised as a perfectly new departure.—*P. M. G.* April 30th.

We are told, Russia refuses to give way; but if she is not pressed too hard in respect to this principle, she would make far-reaching concessions in the details of the treaty. In plain words, she would pay a high price for a tacit admission that all former treaty obligations are practically cancelled, and that the general relations which Russia has established or may establish with Turkey have ceased to be a matter of European concern. . . . The British Cabinet, it appears, admits in principle that an interchange of views respecting the substance of the treaty would be desirable, in case the difficulties which now obstruct the Congress should be removed; but it shows no inclination to waive this preliminary condition. . . . In other words, we are holding our case in reserve until the Court before which it ought to be laid is properly constituted, or, at least, until there is a fair prospect of its being thus constituted. If this is a correct account of the situation, it is evident we are just where we were. If a little progress has been made with the negotiations for the mutual withdrawal of forces from Constantinople, that is so far satisfactory, but "some little progress" in so complex a negotiation is not very much.—*T.* May 4th.

Refined as the dispute was, it brought matters to a deadlock, and for weeks seemed as if it would prove the occasion for the commencement of that war which had been so long threatening, and which many thought must now surely come. The lion and the bear, face to face on the narrow path, the precipice below them, and the unanswered question, "Which goes back?"[1] seemed only too faithfully to typify the situation.

But there was another question, for the consideration of which it was sought to secure attention in England:—the question, "Why shall we fight?"

The first answer, and for many the final and conclusive answer, is that if we fight we shall fight to uphold the integrity of treaties, to maintain the sovereignty of International Law. Good, honest, straightforward men use these phrases and say that in assuming such an attitude we are taking up an impregnable position. Writers in the press, both at home and abroad, tell us the same thing. One or two Ministers, but by no means all of them, have employed similar language. Mr. Hardy has just shown at Bradford

[1] *Punch*, April 13th.

that he is one of those who do employ it. I should be very loth to say that the cause thus suggested is not sufficient to vindicate and even glorify war. It is true that we should be fighting for an idea, which would be a departure from our reputed practice and policy, but the idea would be in the highest degree noble. It would be that of an authority, founded on justice and clothed with the sanctions of law, superior to, and controlling the arbitrary will of any isolated Power. I am not surprised that many persons should kindle at the thought of a war undertaken for the purpose of upholding such an authority.

At the risk of being told that I am repeating arguments that have already been heard and disregarded, I venture to ask you to give me a little space while I try to prove that the declaration that in fighting Russia we should be fighting to uphold the sovereignty of law is an assumption altogether devoid of foundation.—*Mr. Courtney* in *T.* May 6th.[1]

It may be questioned whether the English Government, in insisting on a formal subscription by Russia to their doctrine of the validity of treaties, was actuated by zeal for abstract International Law, or rather by desire for a lever to obtain concessions from Russia. Was the real hindrance to going into the Congress, the point of form, or the doubt how far the objections of the English Government to the Treaty of San Stefano would have effect given to them there?

To be sure, the removal of this doubt by a preliminary understanding as to where Russia should give way, and what objections the English envoys would ultimately waive, is associated with Lord Salisbury's tenure of the Foreign Office, and not with Lord Derby's;—but the following passage, interpolated by the *Times*, at a comparatively early stage of the dispute, into a series of articles insisting on the importance of upholding the abstract principle is not without its significance.

> But why, it may be asked, should this country insist that the treaty should be formally presented to the Congress? France, Italy, Germany, and Austria make no such demand. They are satisfied to know the contents of the treaty, and to have the power of submitting the whole of it to the judgment of the plenipotentiaries. Why, then, does England alone insist on the formality of presentation? . . . In this case, as Lord Derby has more than once shown, we are under no moral obligation to enforce the Treaty of Paris. Had we been so bound, it would have been our duty, and the duty of all the other signatories, to declare war against Russia the instant that, by entering Roumania or Armenia, she attacked the integrity and independence of the Ottoman

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 50, for the argument.

Empire. Nor does this country make its formal demand out of any determination to uphold the binding force of treaties in general. Its highly practical temper will always prevent it from becoming the Don Quixote of International Law. But although we have no moral obligation to enforce the Treaty of Paris, we have a technical right to demand that it shall not be revised without our consent, or without as much formality as that which attended the original arrangement. We appeal to that technical right for reasons which ought to be frankly stated. They are not sentimental; they are connected with no debatable theory of International Law. They are based on the material interests of this country. Unless the Congress should have every formal advantage on its side, the work of revision might become little better than an idle ceremony —*T.* March 21st.[1]

Meanwhile, it appears to have pleased the German Government that the impending war between England and Russia should be averted.[2]

It was, perhaps, too much to expect that material progress would be made during Easter week in the negotiations which Prince Bismarck set on foot; but it would certainly seem as if no appreciable advance had been made towards a better understanding between the two parties chiefly concerned. One "formula," as it is called, after another has been proposed with a view of bridging over the chasm between England and Russia respecting the functions of a Congress, and the relations of Europe to the Treaty of San Stefano; but none has yet been successful. Similarly, the proposal for the simultaneous withdrawal of the British and Russian forces from the neighbourhood of Constantinople is minutely discussed, but no definite scheme for the purpose seems to have as yet obtained any acceptance. Negotiations on both points are said to continue, and it is at least a matter for satisfaction that they are not broken off.—*T.* April 27th.

A way out of the *impasse* was found at last. Count Münster, the German ambassador, succeeded in finding an adequate "formula," and on June 3rd the following interchange of despatches took place:—

[The Government of Germany] in giving this invitation to the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, understands that, in accepting it, the Government of Her Britannic Majesty consents

[1] See *ante*, p. 399, for another part of the same article.

[2] See sketch of Prince Bismarck "Working the Points":—

The trains still thunder nearer, their lights flash
Full on each other; in one moment more
They'll meet in mutual wreck, their whirling roar
End in a ghastly crash!
Gazers stand breathless, wondering "Can this man
Manage the points? Or will he, if he can?"
—*Punch*, May 4th.

to admit the free discussion of the whole of the contents of the Treaty of San Stefano and that it is ready to participate therein. —*Münster to Salisbury.*

The undersigned, taking act of his Excellency's verbal intimation that the invitation has been sent in the same terms to the other Powers signatories of the Treaty of Paris, and understanding that those Powers, in accepting this invitation, assent to the terms stated in his Excellency's note, has the honour to inform his Excellency that Her Majesty's Government will be ready to take part in the Congress at the date mentioned.—*Salisbury to Münster.*[1]

The first great advance has at length been made towards a peaceful solution of the crisis in the East. . . . [The recognition of the principle for which, throughout the negotiations, the British Government has contended] is afforded in the most ample manner. . . . Ministers have succeeded; and their success will have the legitimate effect of enhancing the authority with which this country will enter upon the coming discussions. . . . But this consideration is of very minor importance compared with the fact that another and a most decisive check has been established against the tendency which has of late years been shown to disregard the principle that international agreements are binding until repealed by mutual consent. Upon that principle rests not merely the existing public law of Europe, but the hope that such law may in the future be extended and more permanently established.—*T.* June 4th.

Thus, while the formal difficulty was got over, it was claimed that a great principle had been vindicated. But by the time that this solution was arrived at the English Government had taken yet a new departure, and their excessive zeal for the public law had somewhat abated in view of the opportunity they had found to come to a secret agreement both with Russia and with Turkey.[2]

§ 7. *Progress of Events.*

a. Lord Derby's Resignation.—The tension of feeling which accompanied the passage of the Dardanelles by the English men-of-war relaxed a little when no immediate collision occurred; but this tension was soon to be renewed by measures on the part of the English Government, each of which, as it was announced, seemed to leave men no choice but to regard war as more imminent than before.

[1] *Turkey*, xxxiii. 1878, Nos. 1, and 2.
[2] *Post*, §§ 9 and 11.

The first of these was taken while the negotiations between Russia and Turkey were still in progress.

> The announcement is officially communicated to us that it has been decided to employ Lord Napier of Magdala as Commander-in-Chief of any expeditionary force that may be sent out in case of war, and that he will have Sir Garnet Wolseley as Chief of the Staff. This intimation, conditional as it is, brings us nearer in view of war than anything that has been written or spoken on Ministerial authority.—*D. N.* Feb. 28th.

> Our especial hope is that Lord Derby may be able to hold his own, and also that he has some clearer and wiser policy in his mind than that of putting off war as long as he can—following that maxim of Canning which he has quoted approvingly more than once, and if we must have war sooner or later, preferring to take it later. It is plain that we do get every now and then a little nearer to the edge of war. It does not follow that we must make the plunge because we are nearer to the brink, but it is at least significant that despite all the good sense and the pacific purposes of the Foreign Secretary, we should still keep approaching the brink.—*D. N.* March 1st.

Again, when the insistence of the English Government that the treaty should be "submitted" had brought matters to a deadlock, the English Government resolved to call out the Reserves, and to bring a contingent of Indian troops to Europe. Further steps, it is said, were mooted, having regard to the seizure or occupation of a naval station in the Eastern Mediterranean; but what took place with regard to this matter is, as yet, obscure.[1]

The resolution to call out the Reserves was at once made public, but the determination to bring the Indian troops to Europe was not allowed to transpire until Parliament had separated for a long Easter recess.

In these resolutions Lord Derby did not concur; and his resignation it was which made the world aware that a new crisis was upon it.

> The scene has changed once more, and this time it seems as if a catastrophe were immediately at hand.—*Spec.* March 30th.

> Shortly before a quarter past five [on Thursday, March 28th] the Earl of Derby entered [the House of Lords] without attracting any particular notice. It appeared, indeed, that some minutes elapsed before the noble lord was observed to be sitting below the gangway, a position which at once, and without a word of speech, announced the fact that he had resigned. . . . As soon as it was generally perceived that Lord Derby had taken his seat below the

[1] *Post*, p. 406.

gangway, a quick movement was discernible among the crowd of Privy Councillors on the steps of the throne, and amongst the other and equally crowded sections of hon. members from the other House. Every man seemed to turn to his companion to communicate the discovery simultaneously made, that Lord Derby was no longer Foreign Secretary. The noble lord lost no time in confirming this surmise, and there was no circumlocution or introduction in his statement. "My lords," he said on rising, "I take the earliest opportunity of stating that I have ceased to hold the office of Foreign Secretary." There was no demonstration amongst the limited and scattered audience to whom this momentous announcement was directly and formally addressed. But in the Strangers' Gallery, where, to the despair of the attendant, everybody was standing up, and straining every nerve to catch the words which fell from the lips of the Foreign Secretary, there arose a curious exclamation, like the drawing of a deep breath after witnessing some perilous incident.—*D. N.* March 29th.

The Cabinet, said Lord Derby, had arrived at certain grave and important conclusions in which he had not been able to concur. To prevent needless alarm, he would say that he did not consider these measures as inevitably tending to bring about war, and to prevent misconstruction he would say that he did not dissent from the view taken by the Cabinet as to the conditions upon which England ought to go into the Congress.

Lord Beaconsfield announced the decision which had been come to with respect to the Reserves, and spoke of the quarter of a century which had passed without a cloud over the relations between Lord Derby and himself. "These wrenches of feeling are among the most terrible trials of public life."

The resignation of Lord Derby is an event which cannot but create a profound emotion throughout the country. The news of it will be received with something like delirious delight by the war party, and will cause many who hitherto still hoped that peace would prevail to feel that the security they most relied upon is gone.—*D. N.* March 29th.

The bedesman, in Scott's romance, tells his companions in peril, caught like him on the shore between the steep crags and the rising sea, that so long as the least tip of a rock on the seaward side remained uncovered by the waves he had no serious fear, but that when that disappeared it would be time indeed to grow alarmed. . . . If Lord Derby fulfilled no higher function in the eyes of those who distrust and oppose the war policy, he fulfilled this purpose at least.—*D. N.* March 30th.

It was not long before further references were made to the critical Ministerial resolutions which caused Lord Derby's resignation.

In the debate on the calling out of the Reserves [1] Lord Derby repeated that although he had been referred to by the Premier, and by newspaper writers and others, as having resigned office in consequence of that measure, it was not the sole, nor indeed the principal, reason for the difference between his colleagues and himself. The other reasons he could not divulge until the propositions from which he dissented were made known.

Again, on July 18th, in the debate which ensued when the Protocols of the Congress of Berlin were laid on the table of the House of Lords, Lord Derby, touching on the annexation of Cyprus, said:

> I most readily admit that there is the widest possible difference between the plan finally adopted and what was originally agreed upon three months ago. When I quitted the Cabinet in the last days of March I did so mainly because it was said it was necessary to secure a naval station in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, that for that purpose it was necessary to seize and occupy the island of Cyprus, together with a point upon the Syrian coast, and that was to be done by means of a Syrian expedition sent out from India, with or without the consent of the Sultan, although undoubtedly part of the arrangement was that full compensation should be made to the Sultan for any loss he might incur.
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> *The Marquis of Salisbury*:—We have had an advantage which we have frequently enjoyed in recent times, of revelations from the dark interior of the Cabinet. In fact, whenever my noble friend speaks he has a stock of revelations to make. This is the third time my noble friend has spoken since he left the Cabinet, and on each of these occasions we have had an instalment of the fatal tale. The same objection was made to Dr. Oates when he brought forward successive fragments of his disclosure.—*H. of L.* July 18th.

The Marquis of Salisbury then proceeded to say that the statement that a resolution had been come to to take the island of Cyprus and a position on the coast of Syria, and that that was the ground on which Lord Derby had left the Cabinet, was, so far as his memory went, not true. Being called to order he disclaimed any imputation on Lord Derby's veracity, while repeating his contradiction of the correctness of Lord Derby's statement, a statement which Lord Derby, on the other hand, said he must distinctly and positively repeat.

b. Lord Salisbury becomes Foreign Secretary.—Lord Derby was succeeded at the Foreign Office by Lord Salisbury, Mr. Hardy (who shortly afterwards was raised to the Upper House as Baron

[1] *Post*, p. 410.

Cranbrook) becoming Secretary of State for India, while Lord Derby's brother, the Hon. F. Stanley, went to the War Office in place of Mr. Hardy.

The first act of the new Foreign Secretary was to indite a long and important despatch summing up the position of the English Government with reference to the negotiations for a Conference.[1]

It was immediately published, and appeared at length in the London newspapers of Tuesday, April 2nd.

The first part of the despatch was occupied in sustaining the position the English Cabinet had taken up on the point of form.[2]

In the latter, and more important, part, Lord Salisbury dealt with the objections which he had to urge against the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano.

> The most important consequences to which the treaty practically leads are those which result from its action as a whole upon the nations of south-eastern Europe. . . . A strong Slav State will be created under the auspices and control of Russia, possessing important harbours upon the shores of the Black Sea and the Archipelago. . . . It will be so constituted as to merge in the dominant Slav majority a considerable mass of population which is Greek in race and sympathy, and which views with alarm the prospect of absorption into a community alien to it not only in nationality, but in political tendency and in religious allegiance.
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> [The provisions for the organisation of the new State are objectionable, as placing it under Russian control. So is the condition attached to the provision (in itself highly commendable) of improved institutions for the populations of Thessaly and Epirus, namely, that the law securing the reforms should be framed under the supervision of the Russian Government.] . . . By the other portions of the treaty analogous results are arrived at upon other frontiers of the Ottoman Empire. The compulsory alienation of Bessarabia from Roumania, the extension of Bulgaria to the shores of the Black Sea, which are principally inhabited by Mussulmans and Greeks, and the acquisition of the important harbour of Batoum, will make the will of the Russian Government dominant over all the vicinity of the Black Sea. . .
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> [The payment of the indemnity—the amount of which is obviously beyond the means of Turkey to discharge, even disregarding the fact that any surplus of the revenues is already hypothecated—is left to ulterior negotiations. It may be commuted into a yet larger cession of territory, or take the form of special engagements subordinating the policy of Turkey to that of Russia.]

Dated April 1st, *Turkey*, xxv. 1878.
Ante, p. 394.

The combined effect, in addition to the results upon the Greek population and upon the balance of maritime power which have been already pointed out, is to depress, almost to the point of entire subjection, the political independence of the Government of Constantinople. The formal jurisdiction of that Government extends over geographical positions which must, under all circumstances, be of the deepest interest to Great Britain. It is in the power of the Ottoman Government to close or to open the Straits which form the natural highway of nations between the Ægean Sea and the Euxine. Its dominion is recognised at the head of the Persian Gulf on the shores of the Levant, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Suez Canal. It cannot be otherwise than a matter of extreme solicitude to this country that the Government to which this jurisdiction belongs should be so closely pressed by the political outposts of a greatly superior Power that its independent action, and even existence, is almost impossible. These results arise, not so much from the language of any single article in the treaty as from the operation of the instrument as a whole. —*Turkey*, XXV. 1878.

The *Times* says the Circular raises two distinct issues: In the first place the terms extorted from Turkey go far beyond the necessities of the case. In the second place Russia's claim is inconsistent with the London protocol of 1871, which is the latest exposition of the public law of Europe.—(April 2nd.)

The events of the last few days have had the effect of completely transforming the aspect of the Eastern Question. . . . Tongues at length are loosened, and there is a general sense of relief at the truth having at length been spoken respecting the character and results of the treaty. . . . The main argument of Lord Salisbury's despatch is occupied in a vigorous exposition of the sweeping and revolutionary results which the treaty must necessarily produce.—*T.* April 3rd.

The despatch may be regarded as an appeal to public opinion both at home and abroad in justification of the course taken by the Government with respect to the meeting of the Congress. It states with great force the English objections to the San Stefano Treaty.—*D. N.* April 2nd.

The tenour of the despatch indicated that while the Government were willing to allow that the object of providing for the good government of the Christian populations was worthy of approval in the abstract, yet that they regarded the practical question as confined to the alternative of rehabilitating Turkey, or of seeing Russia in a position of ascendency which they were unwilling to tolerate.

The threatened ascendency of Russia was just one of those results which many of the "violet" party had desired to obviate

by a timely readiness to take part in procuring the emancipation of Turkey's Christian populations. As things stood there were probably among this party a few who now inclined to think the alternative of the Government a true one. Most of them, however, regarded that alternative as vicious. There was still room, as they believed, for the adoption of a policy which should at once extend, rather than cut down, the limits of the Emancipation, and tend to secure, rather than imperil, the interests of England against Russian ascendency. Meanwhile the Government seemed arming to give effect to their objections, preliminary or otherwise, to the Treaty of San Stefano.

c. The Calling Out of the Reserves.—On April 8th, Addresses were moved in both Houses in response to the Royal Message announcing the calling-out of the Reserves, a message which had been formally communicated to Parliament on April 1st. Lord Beaconsfield defined the policy of the Government by reference to Lord Derby's despatch of May 1st of the previous year. That is the despatch in which the English Government had expressed the displeasure with which they regarded the course of the Russian Government as a contravention of the Treaty of Paris.[1] Thus he defended the measure announced in the Royal Message as part of a policy directed to uphold the Treaty of Paris, assuming the essence of that treaty to be the maintenance of the Turkish Power.[2] The narrow definition[3] of "British Interests," which had served for the period of Conditional Neutrality, seemed as completely forgotten as if it had never existed. Once more the interests of England were identified with the maintenance of the treaties and of the Turkish Empire.

> *Lord Beaconsfield* continued:—[Save the merely technical ones, every article of the Treaty of San Stefano was a deviation—he would not say a violation, for that would be a harsh phrase—from the treaties of 1856 and 1870. In the position in which this country now finds itself, no one who feels responsibility could pretend that when all are armed, England alone should be disarmed. Lord Derby could never uphold that view or he would not have sanctioned the early meeting of Parliament or the vote of credit.] No, I do not think such things of him, and to the individual of whom I did I should say, "naviget Anticyram;" only I trust for Heaven's sake that his lunacy would not imperil the British Empire. . . . That Empire is no mean heritage, but it is not a heritage that can only be enjoyed. It must be maintained, and it can only be

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. pp. 182 and 201.
[2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 119.
[3] *Ante*, p. 200.

> maintained by the same qualities which have created it—by courage, by discipline, by patience, by determination, by a reverence of public law, and the respect for national rights. My lords, in the East of Europe at this moment some securities are imperilled. (Cheers.) I never can believe that at such a moment it is the peers of England who will be wanting in upholding the cause of the country.—*H. of L.* April 8th.

Lord Granville, as leader of the Opposition, announced that he did not intend to offer any opposition to the motion, and when he had finished his criticisms, Lord Derby delivered the most important speech of the debate. The Premier had taunted him with inconsistency:—

> My noble friend knows that I did not very willingly acquiesce in the early summoning of Parliament, and that the date ultimately fixed was a compromise on a proposition that Parliament should meet even earlier than it did. My noble friend is also aware that I expressed grave doubts as to the necessity for this vote of six millions, at least to its full extent. I remember that my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer endeavoured to remove my doubts. . . . No doubt I acquiesced in the vote of six millions; but if I am to make a clean breast of it, I will explain that when that question came forward I had temporarily retired from the Cabinet. . . . It was impossible for the Government to recede from a step which they had publicly announced; and, feeling the great inconvenience of breaking up the Cabinet at such a moment, I acquiesced in what I had previously opposed.—*Lord Derby, H. of L.* April 8th.

These disclosures elicited a strong protest. Lord Derby had made, said Lord Salisbury,

> the most remarkable speech I ever heard in either House of Parliament. I never before heard a Cabinet Minister speak so freely. I listened to the speech of my noble friend with ever-increasing astonishment. . . . Am I not defending a great constitutional principle, when I say that for all that passed in the Cabinet each Minister is absolutely and irredeemably responsible? He has no right afterwards to say that he was not a party to the compromise. . . . Absolute responsibility was taken by every one who, after a decision of the Cabinet, remained within its walls. It is only on that principle that the responsibility of Ministers to Parliament can be maintained.—*Lord Salisbury, H. of L.* April 8th.

Of the hint contained in Lord Derby's speech of further surprises in store we have already spoken; but perhaps the part of his speech which attracted most attention was his argument, that neither on the point of form involved in the negotiations, nor

on the points of substance, was there anything to justify a resort to arms.

I think this is a time when the whole situation may fairly be reviewed. I want to know what the emergency is, and what has created it. It is not a fact that we have exhausted diplomatic efforts. I may be told that the negotiations for holding a Congress have come to a deadlock. I do not know that that would be in itself a thing to be regretted. With the single exception of Austria no Power seems very anxious that a Congress should be held. . . . I would not press the matter on immediately. I don't think I am wrong in saying that there is in this country a very strong feeling of irritation against the Russian Government—I speak of public feeling. I don't think there is any real, solid ground for irritation on the part of the people of either country, and I think that if an opportunity were given for it to subside no harm, but some good, would be done. . . . There is one possible motive for haste which would be intelligible, but which I utterly disclaim any intention of attributing to the Government. I could quite understand it if the object was to take advantage of the strong feeling which undoubtedly exists at this moment in this country, and which might perhaps cool if left for a few weeks.

There are, my lords, three questions which sooner or later will have to be considered—What are your means of fighting, who are your allies, and what you have to fight for. . . . I can at least tell you one thing, that we should not have an ally in Germany. . . . If you are to look anywhere with any chance of success for a Continental ally, Vienna is the quarter to which you may look, but I think it is fairly open to doubt whether you can rely much on Austrian co-operation.[1]

Under those conditions I am compelled to ask—if, as so many people believe and expect, we are, I will not say drifting, but rushing into a war—(Opposition cheers)—what are we going for? What is to be the result of the war? I know, at least, what it will not do. There is one class of politicians who, I believe, are numerous in this country, who are equally sure of disappointment whatever happens. That is, those who profess admiration for the Turks. You might have kept that Empire alive if you thought it desirable, but you cannot restore it. (Opposition cheers.) You cannot bring the Turkish Empire back. My noble friend at the Foreign Office would be the last person to wish to do it. England would not allow it, and all Europe would prevent it. . . . If it is only to adjust a boundary, or to save a town, or to cut off something from the pecuniary indemnity, or to make various modifications of detail, I say these are results we might fairly hope to obtain by diplomatic negotiation.

[1] It was known that negotiations were pending between Russia and Austria. "'Yield everything we can part with, but bring back Austria.' Such are the curt but significant instructions which General Ignatieff is declared, on no mean authority, to have taken with him to Vienna."—*St.* March 29th.

We all know there is a great deal more behind this mere modification of the treaty. Ask any man you meet who indulges in warlike talk what he thinks, and he will tell you we have lost influence in Europe and the East, and we must fight to regain it. . . . But, if it were true that the influence of England had diminished, I should say it had diminished by the course of action which we deliberately and of our own choice took. We chose to stand neutral when we knew that there could be nothing but one end to the war between Russia and Turkey. If you did not expect such an ending, then what did you expect? The truth is, that among the advisers from the beginning to the end none knew their own minds.[1] . . . I must say that I want something more than any argument which has as yet been adduced to convince me that war is necessary in the circumstances most likely to arise. Unless such a war is absolutely forced upon us, it will be a war undertaken without a clear, definite object, with a divided country, and probably without an ally.—*Lord Derby, H. of L.* April 8th.

That speech of Lord Derby's should indeed be circulated by hundreds of thousands in this country, if the friends of peace are up to their work.—*Spec.* April 13th.

In the House of Commons the debate was extended over two nights,[2] and an amendment was moved by Sir Wilfrid Lawson expressing regret that the measure in question should have been taken.

Mr. Gladstone spoke on the first night of the debate.

[Why is the Congress not to meet?] The German Government pointed out to you the road of sound principle and common sense. Meet in some shape or other and clear up these ambiguities. . . .

Some time ago various causes had led to painful apprehension in most quarters, exulting apprehension in some quarters (notably in the offices of some daily newsapers in London, who are very far from being unimportant factors in the management of this question), that the country was to be borne into a war, which, as I believe, it detests and abhors. Remarkable speeches by Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon reassured the country. From the dates of these two speeches we have been sliding on a declivity.

The principal complaints in Lord Salisbury's despatch are these: —they apply in the first place to Bulgaria; secondly, to Thessaly; thirdly, to Bessarabia; fourthly, to Armenia; and fifthly, to the indemnity. Of these the indemnity is one that does not, as it appears to me, belong to the consideration of Europe, excepting in so far as provision is made for commuting it in territory. The territorial commutation is a European matter. . . . I am astonished at the summary manner in which Lord Salisbury disposes of the proposed alienation of Bessarabia from Roumania. It appears

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 68.

[2] April 8th and 9th.

to me that it is impossible to conceive of an act more impolitic and culpable than that proposed act of spoliation. (Cheers from the Ministerial benches.) I am heartily glad to have that sympathy from the other side of the House. I entertain the strongest feeling on this subject. I think the act quite unworthy of Russia. The objection to the proposal as to Bessarabia, however, appears to be only a makeweight in this despatch.

If you were to show in this indictment that the stipulations in the treaty to which you object so endangered the peace of the world that you must take military precautions, why did you shut up your resentment from the month of June last year until now? There is nothing objected to in this despatch that was not known last summer. The first point in the indictment is connected with Bulgaria—the grandest and noblest result of these events, the liberation of Bulgaria, done without any help from us, and under the ban of the displeasure of Her Majesty's Government. . . . The first objection taken is the extent of Bulgaria. . . . I for my part think that the Bulgaria of the treaty is too large. I have no doubt about it. It is not, however, because I look upon the extension of Bulgaria as a Russian measure, but because I regard it as a Sclav measure. It is not just as between the Sclav and the Hellenic populations. . . . Before Russia crossed the Balkans the Emperor told his intention. Again and again as these plans were unfolded to you, you received them with perfect complaisance. . . I confess I know not how the advocacy of these complaints in these terms at this date is to be reconciled with our national honour after the reticence of the last six or nine months.

I object to this resumption by the Government of their most unhappy and ill-starred system of solitary action. It has been their bane all through. . . . They have chosen, when there was a path along a plain, safe, and open country, to take us along the very brink of the precipice. I shall be very glad if we get safely along that brink, and if they do not carry us any nearer to it than we are at present, though I perceive we are a good deal nearer to it now than we were four months ago. If Her Majesty's Government will assent to a policy which I really believe to be the policy described in the words of the despatch, if they will work for the ends of freedom and justice, and will be content to humble themselves so far as to work with Europe and not without Europe or against Europe, my belief is that they will receive the support of a united people, they will earn the gratitude of a nation that is never slow to yield it, and they will escape the immeasurable guilt of a causeless war.—*Mr. Gladstone, H. of C.* April 8th.

In moving his amendment, Sir Wilfrid Lawson did not have the countenance of the leaders of the Opposition. Mr. Gladstone, speaking at the Farringdon Street Memorial Hall,[1] on the night after the division, said that though he did not hesitate to go into

[1] *Post*, sub sec. *g*.

the lobby himself, he deprecated the proposing of an amendment, and was very sorry a division took place, because the effect was to present their cause in an unduly disadvantageous position.

The Marquis of Hartington, in his speech towards the close of the debate, made a strong appeal to Sir Wilfrid Lawson not to press his amendment. The Government, he urged, were sure of an immense majority; that majority would be represented by the war party in this country as a majority in favour of a warlike policy. On the other hand, every vote in the minority might be construed by the Russian Government as a proof that they might count on the existence of a party in England who would back them up against the English Government in resistance to any modification, however reasonable, claimed by the latter.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson, however, insisted upon dividing the House. Many of the Liberals withdrew, and when the division was taken, there were 64 votes for the amendment, against 319 for the Government.

d. Parliament adjourns.—Parliament adjourned on April 16th, not without some protests that in the critical state of affairs an Easter recess of somewhat unusual length was inopportune.

> Our special correspondent at Pera in the telegram which we publish this morning speaks with the gravest misgiving as to the present position of affairs. We are, he says, only too surely drifting into war. The first gun may be fired any moment. . . . Are we alone in the interpretation we put upon Russia's condition with regard to the Conference, or do other Powers think as we do, and are they prepared to sustain us in our attitude? . . . Parliament ought not to be dispersed without such information being given on authority as would enable the country to know, in homely phrase, how matters stand. The interval can hardly fail to be momentous. It is scarcely possible that the tension of the present crisis can much longer be sustained. To us it seems all but certain that before Parliament comes together again the main question will be decided one way or the other.—*D. N.* April 16th.

The Houses of Parliament separated yesterday for a long Easter recess. The House of Commons adjourned for three weeks, and the House of Lords for four. For three weeks, consequently, there will be no opportunity for direct explanations on the part of Ministers. . . . An animated conversation on this subject arose yesterday in the House of Commons; but it was preceded and, as it were, neutralised by a previous statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in reply to a question from Mr. Forster. . . . The reply of Sir Stafford Northcote was on the whole decidedly encouraging. He said he could not with convenience enter upon details; but he could state generally "that

nothing whatever has occurred which should give occasion for increased anxiety on the Eastern Question, nor in any way diminish the hope entertained by the Government of a satisfactory arrangement being arrived at of the difficulties in which we are undoubtedly placed." . . . This is quite as much as could be hoped for, and it justifies Parliament and the country in entering on its welcome Easter holiday with some cheerfulness. Consequently when Sir Wilfrid Lawson and a forlorn hope of ten members protested against the length of the recess, and even against there being any recess at all, on the ground of the extreme anxiety which prevailed, they were utterly out of harmony with the general sentiment of the House. . . . Mr. Fawcett recognised the satisfactory character of these assurances, and withdrew the opposition to the adjournment which he had previously raised. A division of 168 against 10 expressed the general acquiescence of the House, and Parliament has thus separated under a conviction that the emergency is at least no greater than it was two or three weeks ago.—*T.* April 17th.

The history of three months, in which peaceful assurances have been so generally followed by new steps in the direction of war, made the encouraging words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer a little less reassuring than they would otherwise have been. We naturally look for the thunderclap which follows the whisper; and it will be a surprise for the recess if things go as smoothly as Sir Stafford Northcote seems to hope.—*D. N.* April 17th.

e. The Movement of Indian Troops announced.—The very next day the thunderclap came. It was announced that the English Government had taken a further step towards mobilisation, and this time one which, as we shall see, raised constitutional questions of the highest importance.[1]

The news of the moment is that the Indian Government has received orders to despatch troops to Malta. Two regiments of Indian Cavalry, six regiments of Native Infantry, two field batteries of Artillery, and some Sappers and Miners have been selected for this service. . . . The actual force thus summoned to our aid is not large. It probably amounts to about 7,000 men; but, of course, the importance of the movement consists in the evidence it affords of our being able to rely on further resources of the same kind. . . . The supposition naturally arises that this was one of those decisions of the Cabinet from which Lord Derby dissented, but which he was unable to specify, and it will be liable, no doubt, to exciting interpretations. But it is of no more essential significance than the despatch of our fleet to the Sea of Marmora.—*T.* April 18th.

The Government seems to have taken another step in the gradual development of a warlike policy. Public opinion at home

[1] *Post*, § 8, *d*.

and abroad cannot fail to be greatly disturbed by the announcement. . . . The objections we urged yesterday to the inordinate length of the parliamentary recess, receive immediate and striking confirmation. . . . Had the House of Commons been sitting a question would of course have been put at once; and it is just possible that Sir Stafford Northcote might have been able to give a reassuring answer. In the absence of any such statement, or of the possibility of evoking it by a question to the Minister, the public is justified in asking whether this announcement is altogether consistent with the assurances which the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave in answer to Mr. Forster's question, and which he repeated in the debate on Sir Wilfrid Lawson's motion to shorten the holiday.—*D. N.* April 18th.

The measure is one essentially and conspicuously of Imperial character and Imperial moment, and could have been resolved on only by men whose conception of the position, potency, and functions of the British Empire is somewhat more exalted and more far-reaching than that of persons who are by instinct insular, and by habit parochial. . . . The Empress of India may be respectfully congratulated on a policy which necessarily recalls to the mind her august title; and perhaps some short-sighted persons will once again have the grace to recognise that the Prime Minister, in carrying the measure that called it into being, was a more practical statesman than they like to acknowledge. Even they would scarcely urge that the employment of sixty thousand native troops in Europe was a piece of charlatanism. As for the stale aspersion that Her Majesty the Queen was made Empress of India by way of theatrical entertainment, they will now perhaps be able to perceive that it is they who do not know how to distinguish histrionic performances from the serious business of nations. . . . History is very theatrical in that sense—theatrical always when great events are brewing behind the scenes, and when great men walk the stage. Lord Beaconsfield's countrymen recognise in him the stuff of a "daring pilot," and it is a great consolation to them to reflect that, should yet greater emergencies arise, the affairs of the British Empire will not be in such hands as they were a quarter of a century ago.—*St.* (about) April 19th.

[By draughting a *corps d'armée* from the boundless recruiting grounds of her Indian possessions, and summoning her Indian children to stand by the policy of England in the Western hemisphere, the Queen proclaims the unity of the Empire, and consecrates the principle that henceforward there shall be no disintegration of either the interests, the rights, or the resources of the British realm and its possessions. By calling upon her Eastern dominions, and entertaining the loyal applications of her colonies, Her Majesty's "England" is at once made a nation of three hundred millions of souls.]—*D. T.* (about) April 19th.

f. Parliament out of Session.—But though Parliament was down, "Parliament out of session" sprang into a high state of

activity. Out of doors, Ministers and their opponents could descant at large, and the tongues of both alike seemed unloosened. On the one hand, the British Empire, rejoicing in the newly-discovered resources afforded by the Indian troops, was represented as the upholder and champion of the faith of treaties and of public law, while Mr. Hardy, the new Indian Secretary, addressed the Conservatives of Bradford in accents which, says the *Times*,[1] seemed those of a born warrior; on the other hand, the Opposition orators were unwearied in exposing the inadequacy of the reasons for resorting to the alternative of war.

> You are no longer a small island; you are a vast empire, and you have a right to draw from all parts of that empire defenders in whom you may trust.—*Mr. Hardy at Bradford*, April 29th.
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> The "British interests" dodge has been dropped. Now we are asked to go to war or to prepare for war in defence of what they called European law. Does anybody understand European law outside these islands? Europe repudiates our European law. —*Mr. John Bright at Manchester*, April 30th.
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> Would they be diverted from useful reforms and peaceful progress in order to engage in a war for which no man had given any good reasons, and which seemed to be called for only to gratify the theatrical taste of the Prime Minister and to satisfy the vulgar enthusiasm of music-hall patriots? It was the latest proof of the genius of Lord Beaconsfield and the latest illustration of his proposition that we were an Asiatic rather than a European Power to call out half-civilised troops of the Empress of India in order to come to the assistance of the Queen of England. [Bismarck had declared that the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier should not be sacrificed in that struggle.[2] Why should the blood of Englishmen be shed to defend the interests of Germany, Austria, Italy, and France?]—*Mr. Chamberlain at Brierly Hill*, April 30th.
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> I understand Mr. Bright and those who join with him to imply that in the view of this country for the future, might shall be right, and there shall be no such thing as law. . . . We want to know if this view is to be true, that the moment a treaty is made it is to be torn up by any person who has signed it. . . . If that is to be the law of Europe, what is the use of making a treaty at all? Now, be it understood, in the interest of the weak against the strong, . . . the principle that we contend for is this, that if there is a treaty, a concert of Europe, one Power when it finds it in its interest to tear the treaty up shall not do so without the consent of the other Powers. Now that is the point for which we are contending. . . .' Then we are blamed very much because we brought some troops from India. Why should we not? We are all one country.—*Mr. Cross at Preston*, May 2nd.

[1] April 30th.

[2] See report of Bismarck's speech in the German Parliament, *Times*, Dec. 7th, 1876.

We all sincerely hoped we were not going to fight, but if we were obliged to take up arms, we might depend upon it we should not be doing so without cause. We should take up arms to prevent the carrying into effect against our consent of a treaty which would alter the condition of the whole of Europe and Asia, too much to our detriment; we should take up arms to prevent the shores of the Dardanelles, the Bosphorus, and the city of Constantinople being practically placed at the disposal of a Power whose ambition is boundless, and whose plighted faith history has taught us we could no longer trust. . . . And lastly, we should take up arms to demonstrate to the world that Great Britain would not permit treaties which had been solemnly agreed to to be wantonly rent asunder, and the public law of Europe to be utterly disregarded and set at nought.—*Sir John Holker at Preston*, May 2nd.

I hope there will be no war, but I hope it in spite of this conduct of the Government, so obstinately maintained, which far outweighs its vaguely pacific language. I hope it, because we have no case; because we have no allies; because it is hard to see how we could strike an effectual blow at the enemy; because the Russian Government and people are freshly smarting under it, and do not seem to have among them that degree of foolish and guilty passion which has too plainly been driving on, not the largest, but yet an important and very powerful portion of this nation; lastly, because, as even the Ministry must see, we are not an united, but a divided people. Yet these hopes must needs be uncertain as long as the Minister persists in walking with his lighted torch about his powder magazine. It is, then, high time for you to bestir yourselves, as the country has twice bestirred itself, to control the Government. . . . They tell us nothing of the cause of war; for I call large and vague phrases merely nothing. Then, how these phrases shift. First, we were for the *status quo;* then for the integrity and independence of Turkey; then for united action; then for certain defined British interests; then for restoring the balance of power. And now, what are we for? . . . . We are for the "faith of treaties," and we are ourselves advisedly breaking them by keeping our fleet in the Sea of Marmora during peace. We are for the "interests of Europe," but let Europe (and not our Indian army) look after its own interests. I for one will not willingly go into this war until I know what it is about. If what the Government mean is to set Turkey up again, as Mr. Bright suspects, in God's name let them say so, and we shall know how to deal with them.—*Letter from Mr. Gladstone.*[1]

I charge the Government with constant deception practised on the House of Commons and the country, by professions of a wish for peace whilst engaged in acts which are distinctly provocative of war. I charge them, further, with constantly interposing

[1] Read at a Conference held at Liverpool, May 3rd, *post*, p. 423.

obstacles in the way of any arrangement with Russia or the other European Powers for the settlement of the Eastern Question on any basis favourable to the freedom of the oppressed Christian population of the Turkish provinces in Europe. There is a third charge which may be brought against them, as seen in the action of their party organisations in London and in many of the large towns in England. Through that party organisation they attempt to suppress the expression of opinion of thoughtful and peaceful citizens through the ordinary means of public meetings, by an exhibition of violence and rowdyism, from which, for many years past, the country has happily been free; and they are willing to accept this violence and riot as the voice of the English people.—*Letter from Mr. John Bright.*[1]

Protests against the war policy of the Government have not been very strong within the walls of Parliament, but any lack in this respect seems likely to be made up by outside movements during the recess. We have appeals and counter-appeals.—*D. N.* May 2nd.

Parliament is not sitting, but the whole country is in debate on the Eastern Question and the attitude of the Government. Mr. Bright answers Mr. Hardy, and Mr. Cross replies, while minor speakers on either side continue the discussion. . . . We need not dwell on the details of the informal debate which during the last week the country has followed with more perplexity than enlightenment. As we have said, there has been a good deal more rhetoric than logic displayed on both sides.—*T.* May 3rd.

The Prime Minister seems to have educated his party in the warlike spirit he has himself exhibited for the last eighteen months; and probably the various steps in the development of a policy hostile to peace, which Mr. Bright traced out, are similar but happily less successful efforts to educate the nation. We have constantly drawn attention to those two voices of the Government of which Mr. Bright spoke on Tuesday. There has always been an undertone of menace breaking through such assurances of peaceful designs as Mr. Cross gave the Preston Conservatives yesterday. The refrain, "We don't want to go to war," has been kept before the House of Commons and the country; but there has been a perpetual and loud aside of "by Jingo if we do," addressed to the war party to keep up their spirits. Mr. Hardy's fiery speech at Bradford was the next Ministerial declaration to the soothing assurance with which Sir Stafford Northcote sent off the Commons to their unseasonable holiday.—*D. N.* May 2nd.

The speeches made during the recess by the Home Secretary and the Secretary for India are little likely to promote a good understanding between the two countries. . . . The Ministerial speakers repudiate with indignation the charge that they desire war. Their warlike preparations are designed, they say, to

[1] Read at a Conference held at Liverpool, May 3rd, *post*, p. 423.

> perpetuate peace. If this be so, they would do well to speak of Russia in the language usually held to States with which we are at amity. . . . Since Lord Derby quitted the Cabinet, the suggested motives for going to war have taken a wider range. The Secretary for India, the Home Secretary, Mr. Bourke, and the Attorney-General have just at present little to say about our material interests in the East. What they care for is the maintenance of treaties which they in the same breath admit must be revised. What they are determined to enforce, by the sword if necessary, is a bargain, portions of which they admit that circumstances have rendered obsolete.—*D. N.* May 4th.

g. The Ghosts of Agitation.—In describing the general features of the Dictatorship Period it has been seen that resistance to the "red" policy in Parliament was practically broken down, and that any movement that existed out of doors did not amount to an organised and strenuous agitation. But it must not be concluded from this result that Public Opinion had sunk into a state of acquiescence or of indifference. On the contrary, it was a time of the keenest interest and of the highest excitement. The various incidents as they developed themselves were watched with the utmost anxiety, but for the most part as by men who were carried along by a power over which they had lost control.

Following Lord Derby's resignation something like a faint revival of agitation took place.

On April 4th, several hundred gentlemen, representing Liberal organisations in various parts of the country, sought an interview with Lord Granville and Lord Hartington. The circular convening the meeting was signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the National Liberal Federation and by the Secretary of the National Reform Union. It set forth the importance, in view of Lord Derby's resignation, of at once using the full strength of the Liberal party in the cause of peace. Lord Hartington should be encouraged and supported by a positive assurance of the sympathy and confidence of his friends.

Lord Hartington refused to indicate prematurely what course he would recommend the Liberal party in Parliament to adopt, beyond saying that it would be that which should be thought best calculated to prevent the country's being drawn into war. Lord Granville protested that Lord Hartington and himself required no stimulus to adopt the course they thought most judicious to prevent a war which neither this country's honourable engagements nor its national interests required; but at the same time he

did not conceal his belief that such efforts would probably prove futile if the Ministry were inclined to a warlike course.[1]

These replies of Lord Granville and Lord Hartington did not invite a continuance of the struggle. Moreover, to these replies corresponded the refusal of the leaders of the Liberal party to countenance Parliamentary opposition to the warlike preparations of the Government[2]—a refusal maintained until the bringing of the Indian troops to Malta called up the old Whig solicitude for the forms of the Constitution.[3]

There was indeed some ground for hope in the reflection that the catastrophe which had seemed so imminent in February had not then occurred; but as to the ultimate results there was discouragement almost amounting to despondency.

> There are many and powerful influences which at the present moment tend to interfere with the chances of a policy of justice and peace. The resignation of Lord Derby removed a barrier of some strength out of the way of the war party. . . . In statesmanship there often presents itself the kind of ambition which loves to send down to posterity a name associated with the story of a great war. . . . Such an ambition may be alive and craving in our time, and among the directing influences of English statesmanship, and if it be, it has undoubtedly a better chance of asserting itself than it had a few weeks ago. There are other influences, too, which may make for war, as well as the unsated ambition of a statesman. In the mechanism of modern politics finance counts for much. . . . Undoubtedly, too, there is a strong and senseless impulse in favour of war stirring among many classes in this country, who are as far out of the range of political ambition as they are innocent of financial enterprise. A Liberal member of the House of Commons who usually talks good sense in blunt and homely language, said the other night that wherever he went through the country he found the parson and the doctor in favour of war, and he found that if he asked them why they wanted war they never could tell, but they were for war all the same. At the present time in England the war spirit has the power, probably, to do more harm, because the supposed enemy is ready to hand, and all eyes are turned on him. Lord Beaconsfield invariably speaks of Russia as if she were our declared foe already. From the first moment when there was any hint of a disturbance in the East he talked of Russia as if she were our predestined enemy, whom, sooner or later, we must meet in the field. . . . There are probably some millions of persons in this country to whom a phrase is a conviction and a creed; and Lord Beaconsfield

[1] *Ante*, p. 369.
[2] See Sir Wilfrid Lawson's amendment regretting the calling out of the reserves, *ante*, p. 412.
[3] *Post*, § 8, *d*.

> is the most successful phrase-maker of our day. . . . The Liberal party in England have a heavy task assigned to them, and we can hardly wonder if now and then some of them grow despondent, and are inclined to stand aside and let things take their chance. That, however, must not be the disposition of the party as a whole, or of its leaders. . . . It is right to warn the public, and to impress upon the Liberal party, that there are influences at work in our society which are not those of reason, plain sense, and patriotism. Such influences work all the more efficaciously the less they are seen by the public eye, and there is the greater need, therefore, that the light of public opinion should as much as possible be kept fully on them. The chances of peace and war depend now, in all probability more than on anything else, upon the success or failure of measures which are not submitted to the test of any Parliamentary division.—*D. N.* April 13th.

However, some further efforts were made out of doors to reorganise resistance. From time to time gatherings were held of persons who, in many instances, claimed a representative character, and who assembled to confer on the situation or to renew the endeavour to withstand the threatened war. But those who were making this attempt felt themselves engaged in a forlorn hope, and seemed overshadowed by the consciousness that their efforts were doomed to failure.

Through April and May reports of meetings under the heading "The Threatened War" occur from time to time in the *Daily News*.[1] Signatures are invited by advertisement to a memorial to the Queen deprecating the calling-out of the reserves,[2] and we read of a women's memorial to the Queen, containing 11,955 names collected in nine days.[3]

A Workmen's Conference held in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, on April 10th was attended by several hundred persons, comprising delegates from all parts of the United Kingdom. The address of the conveners spoke of the removal of Lord Derby from office as a national calamity, which had left Lord Beaconsfield master.

> His latest acts have been to break off the negotiations for a Conference and to call out the reserves. Unopposed warlike preparations have a strong cumulative force, as is shown by the collapse of the opposition to the vote of credit on receipt of false news from Constantinople which had the appearance of being manufactured for the home market. If we are silent now our

[1] *e.g. D. N.* April 3rd and 5th.
[2] *T.* May 4th. This seems to have been distinct from the declaration against war, mentioned *post*, p. 424, though signed by many of the same persons.
[3] *D. N.* May 13th.

> silence will be taken for acquiescence, and the last plunge may be suddenly taken and justified on the ground of that silence. Therefore we have invited you together to-day. You know what are the views of your fellow-workmen. We deny that the war-party includes a majority of British citizens. If you endorse our denial, it is for you to declare that if we are dragged into war the working classes disown the responsibility of the act, that such a war will be waged by a divided nation, and that a blood-tax in the shape of conscription will meet with the sternest resistance. In a case of unavoidable necessity the working classes would be willing to make any sacrifice in defence of their homes, but in all wars the greatest amount of suffering inevitably falls upon them. . . . The fear of war in 1877 has resulted in heavy reductions in all the great trades and partial or total loss of employment to many thousands throughout the country. Actual war would make matters still worse. We have no desire that Britain should isolate herself from Europe, or that she should not take her share in the settlement of Eastern affairs; but from the first we recognised that Turkish misrule had become intolerable.—*Conveners' Address, D. N.* April 11th.

On April 18th Mr. Gladstone addressed a meeting of Nonconformist ministers at the same place. More than 1,500 delegates from Liberal organisations of the North of England assembled at Manchester on April 30th.[1] On May 2nd, a "non-political" Conference of about 900 friends of peace and arbitration met in the Town Hall at Birmingham. A Working Men's Conference met at Liverpool on May 3rd, when letters were read from Mr. Gladstone and from Mr. John Bright.[2] On May 4th about 600 delegates of agricultural labourers met at the Farringdon Street Hall under the presidency of Mr. Arch. It was resolved that should war result from the refusal of the Government to submit their differences with Russia either to a congress or to arbitration, those present would use their influence to induce their fellows to strike against war by not enlisting.[3] A Conference (invited by advertisement) of "Delegates from all Religious Bodies and Industrial Associations connected with the counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth," assembled on May 8th at Cardiff. Mr. Abraham said he attended directly on behalf of 15,000 miners, who had most emphatically

[1] The "conference" was held in the afternoon, and a "meeting" at the Free Trade Hall in the evening, when Mr. Bright spoke, *ante*, p. 417. The *Standard*, May 2nd, notes that an out-door meeting to support the Government, and to protest against Radical sympathy with Russia, was held simultaneously with the meeting in the Free Trade Hall.

[2] *Ante*, p. 418.

[3] *T.* May 6th.

impressed on him to say "we are for peace, and not for war."[1] On May 8th, Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden, addressed two deputations; one from Manchester, and one from the Liberal Association of North and South Wales.[2] On May 23rd a deputation representing more than 1,600 ministers of the Free Church, the United Presbyterians, and other denominations in Scotland had an interview with Mr. Gladstone at the Westminster Palace Hotel, and presented him with an address expressing approval of his attitude on the Eastern Question.[3]

The tone of these gatherings—the ghosts of Agitation, if so they may be called—affords the most marked contrast to the tone of the Agitation of September, 1876. Then it was full of self-confidence; now it was downcast and distrustful, distrustful of its own backing in the country, and daunted by the forces with which it had to contend. The comparison is completed by the contrast between the show of deference and consideration shown by the Ministry through Lord Derby to the deputations of July and September, 1876, and the lightness with which Lord Salisbury now brushed aside an inconvenient declaration of opinion on the subject of the policy of this country. He refused to accede to the request of the Duke of Westminster and others that he should appoint a day to receive a deputation, who wished to present the signatures attached to this "Declaration against War." These were upwards of 220,000 in number, many of them those of persons who, from their social position or their eminence in literature or science were, it was submitted, entitled to claim his attention.[4]

> The declaration against war which it was proposed to place in Lord Salisbury's hands is worded as follows:—"We believe that there has not existed during the past twelve months, and that there does not exist now, any justification whatever for a war between Russia and Great Britain, and we should hold our Government guilty of the greatest crime towards this nation should they lead us, or allow us to drift, into war." This strong expression of opinion has received the signatures of eleven peers, three bishops,

[1] By way of counterblast to this Conference a public meeting was held at Cardiff on May 15th, where a resolution was proposed declaring the Government worthy of support in their endeavour to maintain the peace of Europe and uphold the honour and interests of the British Empire. An amendment was proposed. The meeting was a very stormy one, but the resolution was declared carried.

[2] *Post*, p. 434. It was on this occasion that one of the deputation spoke of Lord Beaconsfield as "Mephistopheles," *ante*, p. 329.

[3] *Post*, p. 445.

[4] The communication requesting the interview was made to Lord Salisbury on Saturday, May 18th. It was signed by the following:—"Westminster, Rutland, Bedford, Bath, Shaftesbury, Cowper, Camoys, Coleridge, Arthur Russell, F. Leveson-Gower, J. A. Froude, R. W. Church, Charles Darwin, Charles Wood, W. Denton, George Rolleston, William Mather."—*D. N.* May 23rd.

of a large number of the clergy of the Established Church and Nonconformist ministers, and of many persons of national reputation in literature, science, and art. The total number of signatures attached to this declaration is now little short of a quarter of a million. This result has been obtained by the labour of two or three individuals in the course of one month, without any previous organisation. Those engaged in the work have evidence to show that with more time and help the number of signatures might have been quadrupled.—*D. N.* May 23rd.

It was hardly to be expected that the Foreign Secretary would receive the deputation who desired to present to him a declaration, signed by about a quarter of a million persons, against our being "led or allowed to drift into war." It was a good deal to ask a Foreign Minister thus to admit a deputation who would practically present to him an indictment against his own conduct. But a sufficient ground for his refusal may be found in the inconvenience of entering on any public discussion of the matter at the present moment. It has been abundantly shown that the Government are, on the whole, acting with the support of the country; and they must be left for the moment to themselves.—*T.* May 23rd.

h. Estimates of the "violet" forces.—Yet when the party of resistance set themselves anxiously to review their forces, it seemed they would have no reason to despair, if only those who were on their side could be allowed their due weight in this grave national emergency. The proceedings at the Conference of April 10th[1] were largely occupied with this topic.

Mr. Burt:—The notion had got abroad that the working people were entirely in sympathy with the warlike policy of the Government. (Loud cries of "No, no.") He took that emphatic answer as that of at least the great majority of the working people of this country. (Great cheering.) How that delusion arose, he knew not. It might have been through the "Rule Britannia" and "By Jingo" rowdies who brought disgrace upon London in Hyde-park a few weeks ago; but they in no sense represented the great mass of the intelligent working people of this country, who, he could say from his own knowledge, intensely desired the maintenance of peace. It was of course difficult to get at the opinions of such a large and heterogeneous body as constituted the working classes; but it was a significant fact that not a single man whom the working people had honoured with their confidence had spoken in favour of war, while most of their leaders had spoken strongly in favour of peace. Such a gathering as this Conference, consisting of men convened at a few hours' notice from all parts of the United Kingdom, was also very significant.

[1] *Ante*, p. 422.

Mr. Gladstone:—I have been very desirous to learn what report you had to make as to the state of feeling in the country, and I was very glad to hear some of the things that were reported. A gentleman who came from Newbury said that the sentiments of the majority in that town were adverse to peace. If it be so, let us know it; do not let us close our eyes to facts, but let us try and get to the bottom of the matter. . . . [Though reinforced by representatives of peace associations—which I quite admit are not to be taken as representing working men generally—you are, as I understand, generally speaking, men connected with societies belonging to the working classes, in which are enrolled no inconsiderable portion numerically of the leading portion of the working men of the country.] To this I may add that more than one speaker has reported with regard to the sentiments of the agricultural labourers. I have myself had considerable means of judging as to the state of public sentiment on this question. . . . With regard to the rural labourers, I may state that I have had sent to me a multitude of reports and a number of resolutions in which the parties have done me the honour to mention my name, which are of perfectly unvarying terms. . . There are great differences of opinion on this question, so far as we can perceive what are the opinions held both in different parts of the country and among different classes. The opinion of Scotland twenty months ago, when the public first began to give its attention to this subject, was somewhat in rear of that of England. . . . At the present time there cannot be the smallest doubt as to the opinion of Scotchmen on this subject. With regard to Northumberland, which has many points of affinity with Scotland, I have been delighted to learn, as I am sure you will be, that the Tory candidate for that county, in his canvass, has declared that if he is returned to Parliament he will stand up for the autonomy, liberty, and self-government of the Christian provinces of Turkey. . . . Something has been said about Wales. I will answer for Wales. I well know what Welshmen are, and what their feelings are. I am sorry to say that in London opinion is less satisfactory than elsewhere. How it is divided I will not undertake to say, as regards the mass of the population. How it is divided in the upper classes of the population, I am sorry to say I know but too well. I know but too well that those who ought to be the natural, historical, legitimate advisers and guides of the people hold opinions on this question which, if they prevailed in the country, would do nothing but misguide and lead us alike into danger and shame. Well, that that influence is very powerful in London is not to be denied, nor can it be denied that it extends to a considerable portion of the population. Let me tell you one of the criteria which I have for judging. I have peculiar means of information in the private letters that I get either of eulogy or of condemnation, and which have come to me in what I may call a flood every morning, and almost by every post, for the last eighteen months or two years. [There has been much real consolation and

comfort in private letters from men who are on the right side on this question. But there have been letters of another kind; some of rational remonstrance; others of severe criticism, on the whole, useful even where it is not quite just, and from that point they go downwards till they sink into the depths of abuse and vituperation of all kinds which I will not describe. These letters are beyond question due to the influence of the London press.] I don't blame the writers of these letters; I blame those who inflame and mislead their minds. I don't blame so much either those who break windows; I blame those who use language and propagate sentiments which predispose people to break windows.

Well, gentlemen, I rejoice at the reports which have been made to-day with regard to the general state of public sentiment on this question. Newbury is an exception. . . I can fairly testify that at this moment the sentiments of the great majority of the people of this Empire are in favour of peace.—*At the Workmen's Conference*, April 10th.[1]

It so happened that several bye-elections took place about this time, and these were eagerly watched for the purpose of gathering any clues which they might afford to the state of Public Opinion. But the indications were inconclusive.[2]

[1] *Ante*, p. 422.

[2] Considerable significance was attached to the Worcester election (March 28th), which resulted as follows:—

Allcroft (C.)	2,609
Lycett (L.)	2,155—Majority, 454.

It was supposed that this result had something to do with the change of attitude of the *Times*, which took place about the same date.

It subsequently appeared that extensive bribery had prevailed. "That contest was the severest ever known, and a regular understanding was come to between the parties that each side was to do its best and its worst, and it was agreed that no inquiry should follow. That arrangement was fully carried out. The election was a most expensive one, and, to say the least of it, one of the most irregular that was ever fought there or anywhere else." (*Statement of Counsel at the hearing of a petition in* 1880. *T.* Oct. 30th, 1880.)

The following elections also took place during this period:—

March 11th, Cirencester:—

Masters (C.)	698
Ponsonby (L.)	347—Majority, 351.

March 14th, Hereford:—

Arbuthnot (C.)	1,110
Pulley (L.)	1,066—Majority, 44.

April 17th, South Northumberland. The poll as originally announced gave Mr. Albert Grey (L.) with 2,914 votes, a majority of two over Sir M. Ridley (C.), but on further scrutiny it appeared there was an equality of votes and a double return, and the seat was eventually adjudged to Sir M. Ridley.

"Northumbrian" writes in the *Daily News* (April 18th):—"The three weeks' campaign, which terminates to-day, has proved beyond all question that, so far as South Northumberland is concerned, what Mr. Gladstone once described as Turkism does not exist. . . . The Conservative candidate was even more zealous than the Liberal in his protestations of devotion to the cause of liberty in Bulgaria. . . . At first Mr. Ridley was ill-advised enough to bluster about compelling Russia to

The latest utterances of English constituencies do not give the decided response which could be desired by a Cabinet engaged in negotiations so critical as those now pending. Tamworth, it is true, is a small borough, too liable to be swayed by local or personal feelings to furnish a conclusive test of Imperial feeling. Still the remarkable verdict just pronounced by the electors there against the Conservative candidate, cannot be explained away. The truth is that there is some growing impatience of the objections which, rightly or wrongly, the British Government are supposed to be raising to the Congress.—*T.* Apr. 26th.

As to the public opinion, the elections at Worcester and Hereford did very great mischief. . . . Yet even if we were to take these elections as a sample of the public sentiment, what sort of promise is there for a war, of which, for every seven men that acquiesce in it even for the moment, six other men utterly and deeply disapprove? The elections in South Northumberland and Tamworth have gone very far to redress the evil; and not less satisfactory is the carefully contrived withdrawal of Colonel Beresford's resignation in Southwark, to avoid the metropolitan defeat which a vacancy would have entailed.—*Letter from Mr. Gladstone.*[1]

submit the treaty to congress on our terms; but a very few days effected a remarkable change in his utterances."

April 25th, Tamworth:—

Bass (L.)	1,186
Bridgman (C.)	607—Majority, 579.

The *Times* a few days later publishes a letter signed by a considerable number of persons, commenting on a statement which had been made by three out of the four proposers and seconders of Mr. Bass, "that in electing Mr. Hamar Bass we did not wish to condemn the present Eastern policy of the Government, but, on the contrary, we approve it." The writers declare that that statement did not in any appreciable degree represent the feelings of Mr. Bass's supporters, and that the electors of Tamworth determined to return a Liberal, not simply because he was a neighbour, but in order to show their strong disapproval of the Government in reference to Eastern affairs.

May 17th, Oxford University:—

Talbot (C.)	2,687
Professor Smith (L.)	989—Majority, 1,698.

Mr. Lewis Morris writes, from the Reform Club, in the *Daily News*, May 2nd, of the surprise with which he received a circular stating that Professor Smith's candidature had no bearing on the Eastern Question. He adds:—"I for one will certainly not take the trouble to vote for the Professor. If we are to have a Liberal candidate, in Heaven's name let us have some one who will give a sound vote on a supreme question which is not, like others, matter for the next or some remote Parliament, but one on which a last effort may have to be made in the House of Commons the very moment the new member for the University takes his seat, if not before."

May 17th, Reading:—

Palmer (L.)	2,223
Attenborough (C.)	1,565—Majority, 658.

The *Daily News* (May 18th) points out that as compared with the previous election the Liberal poll had increased by 429 and the Conservative poll had diminished by eighty-seven votes, and continues:—"There is no mistaking the political significance of this election. . . . The main issue was the Eastern Question. Mr. Palmer expressed in the clearest terms, and repeatedly, his opposition to the foreign policy of the Government and his intention to support the course which Mr. Gladstone has recommended."

[1] Read at Liverpool Conference, May 3rd, *ante*, p. 423.

The fact seems to be that while the opponents of the Government were hoping almost against hope that the contentions on which the Government intended to insist by arms were only contentions such as they would oppose to any overweening pretensions which Russia might suddenly advance, and above all that they had no relation to the policy of supporting Turkey; still, these persons were unable to dismiss the suspicion that the Government were actuated by an unreasonable hostility against Russia, if not by an actual desire for war. Fearing that the Government would be astute to find a pretext for war, they were altogether doubtful of the real purposes and aims of the Government in the pending negotiations. Thus the faint attempted agitation seemed to embody little or no effective criticism, while the counter-manifestations of anti-Russian feeling were still loud. These circumstances gave some colour to the misgiving that anti-Russism had become the preponderating feeling of the nation, or that at all events, as the *Times* now asserted, the Government had the support of the preponderating Public Opinion. However this might be, it was quite evident that the Government would be able to take their own course, whatever it might prove to be, in the pending controversy with Russia, without check or control.

> [There are moments] in which the great assemblies of the State, or the public at large, can make their voice heard, and can exercise a determining influence upon the international debate. Such a moment arose at the commencement of the present week, when both Houses of Parliament had a Constitutional opportunity for pronouncing a decisive opinion upon the proceedings of the Government. . . . They were fairly challenged to say whether they saw any sufficient reason for deprecating the course which the Government had taken, or the main principles on which our policy appeared to be conducted. It was a critical occasion, and, had it been generally felt that there were grave reasons for distrusting the conduct of public affairs, the dissatisfaction of the country could not have failed to make itself felt. . . . All attempts, in fact, to weaken the authority of the Government as representing the country at the present crisis have conspicuously failed. For the moment, therefore, Parliament and the country have, to say the least, waived any objections they might have entertained to the policy which Ministers have been pursuing.—*T.* Apr. 13th.

> There is nothing as yet to show that the country has withdrawn from the Government the substantial support which it has frankly afforded it for the last two years. If we look to Parliament for an expression of public opinion, we are forced to acknowledge that the Opposition has, for the moment at least, collapsed.

If we look elsewhere, we may discern, indeed, signs of misgiving and distrust, of an anxiety which none can conceal, of dissatisfaction with what is past, and of apprehension of what is to come. . . There are two main currents of opinion in the country, and they find substantial expression in the utterances of the Government and in those of their opponents.—*T.* May 3rd.

The forces of the whole Empire are being gradually called forth and concentrated; it is well understood that they may be used in support of a certain policy; that policy has been before the world for many weeks, and there is no organised opposition to it. . . . There has been an abundance of strong language. . . . Insinuations and taunts have been freely used. . . . But there has been an absolute lack of any definite alternative to the course which, as a matter of fact, the Government have taken, and in a word, an absence of any rival lead.

It is difficult not to surmise that the secret of this strange reticence lies in the fact that it is at length seen that the problem now forced upon us in the East is far larger than that of the mere destiny of certain Christian populations in European Turkey. . . . Some instinct, often, perhaps, an unwilling one, seems to paralyse the opponents of the Government in view of the immediate issue. They do not like all that has been done, but they cannot deny that there are issues at stake far larger than those which were discussed with so much vehemence last year, and they have no other course to propose than that which the Government puts forward.—*T.* May 4th.

The fact still remains, and cannot be gainsaid, that the Government, however wrongheaded their policy, and however malign their purposes, still have, to all outward seeming, the substantial support of the country, and that their majority in both Houses of Parliament is still unimpaired. . . . The Eastern Question is the controversy above all others which does not so much divide class from class and party from party as household from household and friend from friend. If the Government are wrong in the policy they have pursued, they are wrong with a very large party in the country, whose motives, however various, it is impossible to condemn in the lump, and sooner or later they will inevitably have to suffer the consequences of their mistake.—*T.* May 24th.

The *Daily Telegraph* reviews its own course for the preceding two years, and says that Public Opinion in general, and notably the *Times*, has now indorsed its action.—(May 28th.)

§ 8. *Constitutional Questionings.*

a. Out-of-door attention aroused.—Ever since the agitation of September, 1876, circumstances had been gradually bringing into prominence the fundamental constitutional question of the ultimate control of the foreign policy of the State. It began, as we noticed,

to be mooted when the Premier at Aylesbury dealt Public Opinion the first blow in the face.[1] As the particular opinion, which believed that inasmuch as it preponderated it had the right to prevail, was nevertheless being brought to think itself helpless against the resolution of the Premier, and, powerless to divert the course of his policy, more and more attention was directed to the constitutional questions involved, till these began to overshadow the special questions out of which they had arisen.

Some, to be sure, pleaded that the policy of the Government now had the approval of Public Opinion. But in other quarters it seemed to be asserted that the Premier had a higher title to dictate the course of our dealings with Foreign Powers, a title founded on the inherent authority of Ministers of the Crown who are charged with the conduct of Foreign Affairs, when such Ministers enjoy the special and personal approval of the monarch instead of merely resting upon the approval of the constituencies. The chosen Minister, according to this view, ought to brush aside the ordinary manifestations of Public Opinion, and even Parliamentary majorities, if they run counter to the inspiration which the doctrine seems in some mysterious way to identify with a high and transcendental Public Opinion.

The phrase "Personal Government" became familiar. It seemed that an old controversy was being revived, and that the power of the Crown might once more become a question between the parties.

The coming to the front of the Constitutional controversy is an important and characteristic feature of the Dictatorship Period.

The earlier suggestions that Public Opinion was seeking to overstep its proper limits were somewhat contemptuously brushed aside, as mere black-letter learning; but as time went on, they could no longer be dismissed in this manner. A comparison of two articles in the *Daily News*, one written soon after the Premier's first defiance of Public Opinion at Aylesbury, and the other written after his triumphant return from Berlin,[2] serves to mark the change in tone which the events of the interval had brought about.

> It is pedantry to write, as one of Mr. Lowe's more rational critics does, that it is not theoretically among the privileges of Parliament to decide on the question of peace or war, or to control foreign affairs in general.[3] We are not dealing with the theory of

[1] *Ante*, p. 19. [2] *Post*, § 12.
[3] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 12, and vol. ii. p. 28.

the Constitution, which is almost always, as described in text-books, a generation at least in arrear of its latest developments and actual working. We are face to face with a great practical emergency; and the control by Parliament, and through Parliament by the country, of the foreign policy of England, and the decision of questions of peace and war, are essentially parts of the Constitution as it now is. We may not find these things written in Hallam or Sir Erskine May, or even in Mr. Alpheus Todd; but they will be found in the writings of their successors, as they are found in Mr. Bagehot's animated essay. We do not seek the living among the dead, and the constitutional usage of the present will always, as we have said, be in advance of the historic and legal theories.—*D. N.* Oct. 2nd, 1876.[1]

According to the Constitutional doctrine, the Sovereign can make war or peace; the Sovereign can conclude a treaty; the Sovereign can pardon a criminal. Suppose some Frenchman had asked any of us a month ago, "What would the English people do if their Sovereign were to plunge them into a great war on mere caprice, and without consulting them; or in a war that they approved, and which was going well for them, to arrange a shameful peace; or to set free, out of whim, a dangerous criminal, justly condemned to death?" Would not the answer have been ready? We should all have said, "You ask such questions because you are a foreigner, and do not understand our ways. Nothing of the kind could occur in England. Our Sovereigns know that they have not really such powers, and our Ministers know it. They know that if they confounded the name with the reality of a power, the very name would soon be taken away in order to prevent confusion."

Could we make any such answer now?—*D. N.* July 23rd, 1878.

It is to be noticed, too, how different was the estimate of the Premier's position and character which now prevailed from that which had been accepted a year or two before. Now he was universally regarded as the strong man of the Cabinet. The "Pretty Fanny's way" theory[2] was quite exploded. His enigmatical utterances were carefully scanned to discover the hidden meaning.[3] Those who inclined to attach the most sinister significance to his measures began to obtain a sympathetic hearing.

The addition of an unconstitutional title to the constitutional title of the British Sovereign seems aptly to symbolise a tendency already perceptible, and which that measure was perhaps partly intended to assist. Dependencies . . . must be governed on prin-

[1] See *ante*, p. 29, for further extract from same source.

[2] *Ante*, p. 100.

[3] In *Spec.* May 11th, W. R. G. draws attention to, and reproduces, a parallel between Disraeli and Napoleon III. published about eleven years before under the title *The Great Twin Brethren.*

ciples wholly different from those of a constitutional polity. . . . In ordinary minds the lines of separate allegiance will become more or less blurred.—*Prof. Goldwin Smith.*[1]

There is at the head of the Government a man of remarkably strong will and tenacious purpose, who, by his own acknowledgment, loves to work in a mysterious way, and to become the hero of a great surprise. . . . Experience of Lord Beaconsfield's policy has very commonly justified the noble and melancholy comparison of experience in general to the stern-lights of a ship, which only illumine the path we have left behind and cannot retrace. The men on whom we should all be glad to rely as maintaining in the Cabinet some check over Lord Beaconsfield are not all as strong of will or fearless of responsibility as he.—*D. N.* Dec. 24th, 1877.

We do not accuse Lord Derby or any other member of the Government of intentional wrong, but we do accuse them of being the weak tools of an unscrupulous Minister, and we will never forgive them until they break away from the degrading connection, and once more assume the honest and independent attitude of patriotic Englishmen.—"*Ruat Cœlum*" in *D. N.* Dec. 28th, 1877.

Our Premier, unless he has been misrepresented, has dreamt of closing his political career with a transformation scene—Europe in flames behind him, and himself passing like harlequin before the footlights.—*J. A. Froude.*[2]

Towards the end of 1877, the fourth volume of Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort* was published. This book was understood to be written at the special desire, nay, under the personal supervision of the Queen herself. It was quickly noted that this volume, in its account of the antecedents of the Crimean War, contained much which was very hostile in tone to Russia. It was noticed, too, that the book contained strong indications of a leaning to the doctrine of personal government in foreign affairs. Moreover, it was said that the Queen was significantly displaying marks of special favour towards Lord Beaconsfield.

The Queen, on Saturday, paid a visit to Lord Beaconsfield in state, received an address at Wycombe, lunched at Hughenden, and returned, after an absence of four hours, to Windsor. Such a visit is so unusual, and the honour is considered, in Court circles, so great, that the wildest interpretations have been put upon its meaning.

Her Majesty, it is said, has just published, through Mr. Theodore Martin, a strong party pamphlet against Russia; she has selected the newest peer in the country for a great social honour

[1] "Policy of Aggrandisement," *Fort. Rev.* Sept. 1877.

[2] Preface to *Is Russia Wrong?* (published by Hodder and Stoughton towards the end of 1877).

because he is anti-Russian, and she must intend to signify that she is personally on the anti-Russian side. Gossip of this kind, as it seems to us, is most derogatory to Her Majesty.—*Spec.* Dec. 22nd, 1877.

The visit to Hughenden Manor has a significance which it is difficult to explain away, and the friends of peace may with some reason complain that they have to contend, not only with a Prime Minister whom they can censure and displace, but with the Crown, which they can neither censure nor displace, except at enormous inconvenience both to the wearer and to themselves.—*Manchester Examiner.*[1]

The introduction of the Queen's name into political controversy is an offence which can reckon on a certain term of impunity. There is danger of repeating, in the very act of rebuking, it. But lately the indecorum has been carried to an extent so gross as to call for protest. . . Those public writers therefore who are, day after day, insinuating, and something more than insinuating, that the girlish partisanship of the Queen is being repeated after more than forty years of rule are, under whatever pretences of loyal admiration, abusing a name and an office which ought to be left out of controversy. . . Lord Beaconsfield, according to these writers, has the ascendency now which Lord Melbourne then possessed. He may say: *Ego et Regina mea.* The late visit of Her Majesty to Hughenden is spoken of as a proof of the special and personal confidence of the Queen. . . [Another newspaper] does indeed distinctly set forth the subordination of Parliament to the Crown in matters of foreign policy. The necessary information "may," our contemporary says, "for years be confined to the Crown and but two members of the Cabinet." It is enough to repeat this doctrine, and to leave the inference implied in it to the judgment of the country. . . The suggestion is industriously made by eager supporters of the Prime Minister, that, apart from and not altogether in harmony with the Cabinet at large, and Parliament, there is a personal policy of Lord Beaconsfield's, supported by the Queen. The idea does injustice, it is fair to believe, until positive proof to the contrary is produced, even to Lord Beaconsfield. In spite of the talk about royal letters to foreign potentates and to the Cabinet, such reports can find credence only where the character of the Queen and the Constitution of England are alike unknown.—*D. N.* Dec. 22nd, 1877.

[1] Quoted in *D. N.* Dec. 21st, 1877.

Punch (Dec. 29th) has some lines apropos of the planting of a "memorial tree" on this occasion, commencing:—

Did the Czar in far Bucharest shiver?
Did Gortschakoff thrill with a dread?

The lugubrious expression on the Premier's face, as he kneels at the feet of the Queen, in the accompanying sketch, while Mr. Gladstone, peering down suspiciously from above, extends over him a formidable woodman's axe, might suggest to a vivid imagination visions of impeachment and a block on Tower Hill.

b. Demand for empirical remedies.—In view of the dangers to popular control which it seemed the Constitution, as understood by Lord Beaconsfield, did not sufficiently guard against, various constitutional remedies began to be discussed.

> "In my opinion," Mr. Fawcett says, "the Government should never be permitted to lead the country one step from the path of neutrality in the direction of war until the consent of the people had been obtained by the verdict of a general election."[1] . . . . We certainly should not be afraid of the result of such an appeal in the present instance. Try the country in any way and every way that can be suggested, and we are convinced that it will be found to be resolutely in favour of keeping out of the present war. . . . . There would surely be great inconvenience, not to say danger, in encouraging the idea of settling questions of peace or war by a sudden plebiscite. The objections would appear to us almost equally great if an ordinary Liberal Government were in power as now when the Conservatives are in office. Such an appeal would give a great chance indeed to an unscrupulous Administration.—*D. N.* Jan. 16th.

The notion that some security was required lest the Premier and Foreign Secretary should commit the country to a policy as to which it was entirely in the dark, found expression in an amendment brought forward by Mr. Rylands to the effect that future treaties, involving armed participation in foreign affairs, should be laid on the table of both Houses before ratification.

In seconding the amendment,

> *Mr. E. Jenkins* said there had been growing up, especially in the midland counties and in Scotland, a strong public opinion upon the subject of the manner in which the Crown had been advised by Ministers to exercise the prerogative. . . . The value of the supposed constitutional check which the nation had in the Parliamentary control over the supplies was shown by recent experience.
>
> *Mr. Gladstone* :—I feel strongly that we ought to avoid whatever temptation there may be to mix up a discussion of this kind on a constitutional question with particular differences that have arisen during the last year or two between the two sides of the House on questions of foreign policy. . . . If the Government still continue to act on the same principle that was observed in former times—and I do not believe that they will act otherwise—then I confess that the present arrangement is the best of which the many difficulties of the case will admit, and is the only one compatible with the carrying out and effective transaction of the important class of business which has arisen.—*H. of C.* June 13th.[2]

[1] The reference is to Mr. Fawcett's speech at Shoreditch, *ante*, p. 296.

[2] The amendment was negatived without a division. Compare Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian references (*post*, chap. xix.) to the treaty-making power, Dec. 1st, 1879, and March 18th, 1880.

c. "Verax" and the "Quarterly Review."—The two pamphlets by "Verax," together with the article by the *Quarterly Reviewer*,[1] the Parliamentary debates on the employment of the Indian troops,[2] the criticism in Parliament on the fact that the negotiations at Berlin were conducted by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary in person,[3] and the general criticisms on the step which the Ministry took in suddenly engaging the country to the entirely unexpected responsibilities of the Anglo-Turkish convention[4] are the most important contributions to the constitutional controversy.

Considerable significance was attached to the utterances of the *Quarterly Reviewer.*

> The object of the *Quarterly Reviewer* apparently is to prove that there is no attempt at revival simply because there has been no interval of decay, and that Her Majesty and her predecessors have on questions of foreign policy invariably exercised a very considerable personal influence arising from that superior intimacy with the subject which their position naturally confers.—*St.* April 28th.

> Don't despise what you may have heard of an article in the *Quarterly Review.* That article is a feeler. . . . It is a clever and a crafty article. I will tell you its purpose. It is, in my opinion, one that is disloyal to the Crown and dangerous to the public interest. Now, what is the Crown in this country? When we speak of the Crown we sometimes mean the Sovereign personally, but in a political sense there is nothing more important than to distinguish broadly between the Sovereign personally and the Crown. The name of the Crown is associated with vast and most important prerogatives. . . . The object of this article, or at least the method employed in it, is carefully to confound the Sovereign and the Crown, and to shift about from the one to the other, and to establish the doctrine that the Sovereign personally has a right virtually to direct the foreign policy of the Minister in his going to peace or war. . . . The direct tendency of this article is to bring the Sovereign personally into the arena of politics. . . . Therefore it merits, in my opinion, the denomination of being a most disloyal production, as well as one of the most dangerous to the public interests.—*Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden,* May 8th.[5]

[1] "The Crown and the Cabinet," five letters on the biography of the Prince Consort by "Verax," reprinted from the *Manchester Weekly Times.*

Quarterly Review, April, 1878, "The Crown and the Constitution."

Reply of "Verax" to the *Quarterly Review,* seven letters reprinted from the *Manchester Weekly Times.*

[2] *Post,* sub. sec. *d.* The *Times* (May 27th) said:—The debate, so far as it had any reality at all, ran in the same line as a controversy on the subject of the "Crown and the Cabinet," which was started by the third volume of the *Life of the Prince Consort,* and which has been carried on by a vigorous pamphleteer on the one side and the *Quarterly Review* on the other.

[3] *Post,* sub. sec. *e.* [4] *Post,* § 11. [5] *Ante,* p. 424.

> When Parliament met last January, divided as opinion was known to be, the very last thing which the public expected was that any difference would arise respecting the working of the Constitution, or the rights of Parliament or the Crown. . . . The employment of Indian troops in Europe, but without the consent of Parliament, has given a shock to all political observers who look beyond the phenomena of the moment, but it has only begun to receive a small share of the reflective attention its importance demands. . . . Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues have violated precedent, surprised the House of Commons, and struck a blow at constitutional principles. It can by no means be regarded as accidental that these things have taken place concurrently with the assertion of strange and un-English doctrines concerning the personal authority of the Sovereign, a subject most unnecessarily forced upon the attention of the public by Court biographers and panegyrists. The latest assertion of these principles, a well-known article in the *Quarterly Review*, received all the notice which it was thought to deserve in these columns immediately on its publication. It was well, however, for Mr. Gladstone to point out, as he did to his visitors yesterday, that the unwarrantable manner in which the reviewer has confounded the personal action of the Sovereign with the Constitutional action of the Crown, is as disloyal to the Queen as it is dangerous to public liberty.—*D. N.* May 9th.

d. Debates on the Indian Troops.—The bringing of the Indian troops to Malta was the occasion for the renewal of the Parliamentary contest, but the ground was somewhat changed. The Opposition, and especially the Whigs, came to the front to enter a protest against a violation of constitutional law.

> Speaking last night of the certainty that Lord Hartington's motion would be rejected by the large majority at the command of Ministers, Mr. Gladstone said: "The vote of the majority in favour of this proceeding will be an historical fact of cardinal importance, but it is our duty to run the risk of that vote. It will be a great evil, it will be a national calamity; but there is one evil greater and one calamity deeper still, and that is, that the day should come when the minority of the House of Commons should shrink from its duty." This is the true spirit of Parliamentary action, and we trust that the forward step now taken by Lord Hartington is but the commencement of a bolder policy than has been followed of late.—*D. N.* May 22nd

On the reassembling of the House of Commons, on May 6th, after the Easter recess, Lord Hartington inquired why the decision to send the Indian troops to Malta, had not been communicated to the House.

Sir Stafford Northcote replied that it was not thought necessary, nor was it according to practice, that such a decision should be communicated to Parliament, and that the most convenient time for raising any discussion upon the subject would be when the estimate of the cost was laid before Parliament.

Thereupon Mr. Fawcett drew attention to what had passed when he had expressed his doubts whether Parliament should separate for three weeks at that critical juncture, and when he had been reassured by Sir Stafford Northcote.

> He was not going to charge the Chancellor of the Exchequer with intentionally misleading. . . . but he and at least 100 other members of the House were misled. . . . It would be in the recollection of members that before the recess he proposed a motion to shorten the proposed recess by a week. . . . The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, "I beg to assure the member for Hackney who has brought forward this motion, and I beg to assure the House most distinctly, that there has been no change in our policy." (Loud ministerial cheers.) No change in our policy! (Renewed cheers.) If the bringing of Indian troops into Europe to be engaged in a European contest was not a change in our policy, he did not know what a change in our policy was. There could not be a change of policy which could raise a more important constitutional question affecting this country or a question of more vital importance affecting the Government and the finances of India. What was the meaning of our Mutiny Bill? One of the most cherished privileges of Parliament was that they should not be overborne by a large standing army—that every year they should vote scrupulously the number of men who should belong to our standing army. And what was the position now? The numbers of the Indian Army were not limited. They might have 200,000 men in that army this year, and 500,000 next year. The Government might decide to bring 70,000 or 170,000, or 250,000 of that army into Europe. (Ministerial cheers.) He heard that sentiment cheered. (Renewed cheers.) And then the Chancellor of the Exchequer might come down to the House, and in a few light sentences say it was not according to custom that Parliament should be informed on the subject. . . . According to the opinion of some of his friends, to whose opinion he was bound to pay respect, there was nothing to prevent the Government, now that they had started on the career of coming to the help of poor enfeebled England by the resources of the Indian army from landing 70,000 or 80,000 Indian troops in London.—*Mr. Fawcett, H. of C.* May 6th.

The subject was again alluded to in the debate on the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill.[1]

[1] May 13th.

The Government are probably beginning to find out by this time that the employment of the Indian troops without the consent of Parliament is not exactly the trivial matter—the matter of course, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer evidently imagined a few days ago. Yesterday, in both Houses of Parliament, intimation was given of an intention to insist upon a deliberate consideration of the important constitutional question involved.—*D. N.* May 14th.

[With reference to the Indian troops, we hope the Ministry will not be] guilty of the grave error which Sir Stafford Northcote appeared at first disposed to commit—the error, we mean, of making light of the complaint against their conduct, and of treating it as a mere "storm in a teacup." Assuredly it is no such thing. . . . The theory which would represent Lord Beaconsfield as now engaged in the realisation of the ambition of his youth—the curtailment of the power of Parliament and the exaltation of the prerogatives of the Crown—is, no doubt, an absurd fancy enough. But the idea has found its way into many persons' minds, or, at any rate, into many persons' mouths; and the Government may rely upon it that those who are interested in encouraging it will watch eagerly for any traces of the spirit which is supposed to actuate these unconstitutional designs.—*P. M. G.* May 14th.

The debates of this evening are likely to be memorable in Constitutional history. They will be received, perhaps, with comparative indifference by the public, which will be far more affected by the momentous news of the day, such as that which we publish from our Vienna correspondent on the success of Count Schouvaloff's exertions and the position of the Russians before Constantinople. But these Constitutional questions, which Lord Selborne and Lord Hartington will introduce this evening, have a strong attraction for men of intelligence and culture, and will be followed by such, both at home and abroad, with lively interest. . . . Whatever may be the immediate result of this evening's debate, it is well that the points raised by Lord Hartington's resolution should be discussed fully. There is always danger lest Constitutional principles should fall into the background and be practically forgotten. . . . We need not conjure up imaginary dangers from the Indian troops now on their way to Malta, or from any fresh reinforcements that may be added to them. To suspect a design upon English liberty is the very madness of suspicion. That a *coup d'état* has been tried or intended is not to be thought of for an instant. It is rather a *coup de théâtre*, to be admired, perhaps, outside this country, but likely, sooner or later, to be a little disapproved at home.—*T.* May 20th.

Pursuant to the intimations which had been given, the question was raised in both Houses on May 20th by motions brought

forward by Lord Selborne and the Marquis of Hartington, respectively.

The debate in the House of Lords was concluded on the same night, and was not pressed to a division. In the Commons, the debate was continued on May 21st and 23rd; and on May 23rd a division was taken, with the result that 347 members went into the Government lobby, against 226 for the Opposition.[1]

The Constitutional point for which the Opposition contended was expressed in the Marquis of Hartington's notice as follows:—

> "That by the Constitution of this realm no forces may be raised or kept by the Crown in time of peace without the consent of Parliament, within any part of the dominions of the Crown, excepting only such forces as may be actually serving within Her Majesty's Indian possessions."
>
> When I use the term "forces of the Crown" I believe I am using a strictly correct and technical expression—I wish it to be understood that my resolution applies solely to regular forces of the nature of a standing army, and not in any way to militia forces raised either in this country or in any colony.—*Lord Hartington, H. of C.* May 20th.

Lord Selborne in his speech laid down two propositions, to the following effect:—

Firstly, that it is necessary to have the previous consent of Parliament before any Imperial forces, in addition to the 135,475 troops voted for the year commencing the 1st of April, 1878, and included in the year's Mutiny Act, can be employed in time of peace elsewhere than in Her Majesty's Indian possessions.

> When I use the words "Imperial forces" those words do not include any local force which, whether known by the name of militia or by whatever other name, is not movable.

Secondly, that under the Indian Government Act of 1858, the Indian Revenue cannot be used without the previous consent of Parliament for the payment of Indian or Native troops out of India, and that such payment is not made legal even when there is

[1] The division was taken in a House of 578 members, including the Speaker and the tellers. It was one of the fullest of the present Parliament. The majority of 347 was composed of 328 Conservatives, eleven Liberals, and eight Home Rulers. The minority of 226 included 205 Liberals, twenty Home Rulers, and one Conservative. In this calculation Mr. Roebuck is no longer reckoned as a member of the Liberal party. . . . The only Conservative who voted with the Opposition was Mr. Newdegate. —*D. N.* May 4th.

The question was again touched on May 25th on the Supplementary Estimates, when a division was taken and the House decided by 214 to 40 to go into Committee.

On June 7th, in the House of Lords, the subject of the forces maintained on the Irish Establishment during the last century was again touched on.

an intention on the part of the Government to ask Parliament for an indemnity.

> I do not mean only a consent signified by an Act of Parliament, but anything which according to Parliamentary and constitutional usage is accepted as Parliamentary consent.—*Lord Selborne, H. of L.* May 20th.[1]

These debates are of the highest interest and importance. Very learned speeches were made by Lord Selborne and by the Lord Chancellor (Cairns). It was contended on the one side that by the Common Law, as declared by the Bill of Rights, no regular forces might be maintained in time of peace, save such as were authorised by the Mutiny Act, in any dominions of the Crown with the exception of India.

> *Lord Selborne*:—I am not now going into the question how far in time of war the application of that prohibition is co-extensive with its application in time of peace. . . . Parliament has always been most anxious even in time of war to confirm the constitutional principle laid down in the Bill of Rights as applicable to time of peace.
>
> *Marquis of Hartington*:—I should not be prepared to admit that even in time of war, the Crown has an unlimited power of ordering troops to be moved from India without the consent of Parliament.

On the other side it was contended that the Bill of Rights applied only to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. It was admitted that the Indian troops could not be introduced into the United Kingdom; but it was contended there was nothing to fetter the power of the Crown to move the Indian army anywhere except within the United Kingdom, except the necessity that the expense should be provided by Parliament.

Such was the main issue raised in these most important debates, and contested with a great display of constitutional lore. But while the Opposition dwelt on the importance of the constitutional considerations, there was a noticeable tendency on the Government side to make light of such scruples, and to sneer at the pedantic frame of mind which could not see that they were entirely obsolete and out of place in modern times.

[1] Lord Selborne's original notice appears to have been to the effect that it is unconstitutional in time of peace to remove any part of the native army of India out of India without the assent of Parliament; which, said Lord Cairns, was entirely different from Lord Hartington's notice. But Lord Selborne's first proposition, as elaborated in his speech, covers the same ground as Lord Hartington's motion.

Lord Cairns:—I come to what, after all, is a dry and bare legal and constitutional question, although it has taken two hours by the clock to call your lordships' attention to it.

Lord Beaconsfield:—We have heard the noble and learned lord opposite and my noble friend on the woolsack indulge in a great gladiatorial duel. We have had the pleasure of witnessing that, between two of our most eminent members. I can only say, we are perfectly pleased with the discussion, except that we would have preferred either silence, or a fair outspoken issue.—*H. of L.* May 20th.

The Government tried to bring back the debate into the region of policy. In the House of Commons, Sir M. Hicks-Beach moved an amendment couched in that sense.

Sir M. Hicks-Beach:—The difference between us and those who sit upon the other side is this: that they disbelieve in the reality of the present crisis.—*H. of C.* May 20th.

The *Times* on one day faithfully reflects the Ministerial contention, on the next it seems visited by a qualm lest, after all, the contention of the Opposition should evoke an efficient echo; finally it threw in its lot with those whose cue it seemed to be to sneer at Constitutional scrupulosities.

No one can suppose that any such terrible offence has been committed. The Government, it may be, have done something like violating the Bank Charter Act. It is questionable, indeed, whether they have done even so much as that. . . . Almost everything may be unjustifiable in Constitutional law, and almost everything may be justified in Constitutional practice. It is utterly unjustifiable to spend money without the previous consent of the House of Commons, but if an emergency existed, it would be utterly unjustifiable in a Government not to spend it. The whole question is whether such an emergency exists, and it is this crucial question which Lord Hartington deliberately evaded. [As to the constitutional question,] the country is scarcely in the mood just now to be stirred very deeply on the subject. We may, however, do justice to Lord Selborne and his supporters for having taken the matter into their hands, and for having, rightly or wrongly, maintained Constitutional rights which might have been taken, by and by, to have lapsed amid general indifference.—*T.* May 21.

The debate on Lord Hartington's Resolution was continued in the House of Commons last night, and, if the value of the discussion could be measured by the light which it casts on dark questions of Constitutional law, it would be of high importance. Mr. Fawcett's speech was an interesting plea for the people of India. The Attorney-General delivered an able essay on the Bill of Rights, and, like other of his excursions into the field of

politics, it contained some bold propositions. Mr. Gladstone was discursive and acute. Mr. Newdegate's respect for Constitutional precedent overpowered his tried loyalty to his party. Mr. Childers was acutely critical. The whole debate, indeed, was of a high order, if we look to mere argumentative excellence. The supporters of Lord Hartington certainly scored a good many points. . . . Mr. Gladstone had some ground for saying that the Ministry had left the House of Commons merely a nominal freedom. It will be generally allowed that, if the Government had acted regularly, it would have asked for a vote of credit before moving a single Indian regiment. All these admissions, and many more, may be freely made; but they are somewhat unreal in the present state of Europe. . . . Lord Hartington states a proposition which derives the whole of its importance on the present occasion from the assumption that we are in a "time of peace" in the real, and not the technical, sense of the word. [The answer to the question—"Was the Government bound to act as it would do in 'a time of peace,' or ought it to have taken the same precautions as it would have adopted in time of war?" will entirely depend on the particular view that may be taken of the present crisis.] If the interests of this country are in no real danger from the Treaty of San Stefano, and if the existing peril is caused by the demands of the Government itself, then, of course, the secret orders for the movement of the Indian troops were not only unnecessary, but a menace to the peace of Europe. On the present occasion we shall do the Liberal party no injustice if we assume that it has other objects in view than the vindication of pure Constitutional principles. It fears, in the first place, to give the Government any new power of enforcing a policy which it distrusts. But there is a deeper, if a vaguer dread. When the Government of the Indian Empire was transferred from the Company to the Crown, and when the two armies were amalgamated, it was predicted that the essential and necessary despotism of the dependency would gradually have a powerful effect on the foreign and even on the home policy of this free country. The more thoughtful Liberals imagine, no doubt, that they now see a confirmation of such fears. Let the Indian army be effectively used in the field of European warfare, and the prerogatives of the Crown will, they may think, be seriously strengthened. The pecuniary control of the House of Commons would often, they may contend, be as verbal as it is on the present occasion. Thus the practical effect of the Constitution might undergo grave changes, although the letter of it would remain unchanged. Such ideas, whether justified or not, have more influence than much of the Constitutional lore which was produced last night; and Mr. Cross, who is to begin the debate to-morrow, might usefully direct some attention to those half-confessed, and, indeed, half-formed apprehensions.—*T.* May 22nd.

It has been felt and said that there was a good deal of unreality in the debate on the despatch of the Indian troops to Europe.

Technical discussions on the Bill of Rights seem to nineteen Englishmen out of twenty as idle as subtle pleas for this or that view of the Thirty-Nine Articles.—*T.* May 27th.

Meanwhile protests were reiterated against the measure, and the dangers which it invited were dwelt upon.[1]

What is the use of the financial control of the House of Commons if it is not free to refuse the money? . . . . . In one breath Parliament will be told that it has a financial control reserved to it, while in another breath it will be told that the money has been actually spent, and that the law declares it shall not be paid out of the Indian revenue. . . . . A more serious subject I cannot conceive than the question whether India is to keep an army placed upon a scale which will allow of the abstraction of numbers of Indian troops for the purpose of fighting our battles in Europe . . . . . That is not all. What is the effect upon our liberties? . . . . . Over and above financial control the House of Commons votes the numbers of men who alone can be legally employed in the British army—(hear, hear); and it has thus been carefully provided for that Parliament should have a restraint upon the foreign policy, and especially upon the war policy, of the Executive Government. . . . . Those are questions of the very deepest kind. I frankly own to you that, in my opinion, either our forefathers . . . . . were a set of simpletons or the control of Parliament is utterly gone—provided the Indian army is to be at the disposal of Government for operations in Europe or in any other part of the world that they may please, subject to no control at all except the necessity of going to Parliament after the money is spent and then saying, "It is for you to judge whether you will pay the bill or repudiate it." [If such proceedings are to go on unchecked, the whole question of peace and war, in which the welfare of the country is more directly involved than in any other], the whole of the question will virtually pass out of your hands, unless you seize the rare occasions when a dissolution, or a chance election, may give you something to say upon the subject. One gentleman said he thought the time had come when the power of war ought to be taken out of the hands of the Executive Government. Now pray

[1] Mr. Gladstone's article, "Liberty in the East and West" (*19th Cent.* June 1878) may be considered as falling within this category.

This article gave rise to a notice of motion in the House of Commons (which, however, was subsequently dropped) by Mr. Hanbury, stigmatising the language contained in part of the article, coming from one of Her Majesty's Privy Councillors, as highly inopportune, and calculated to create sedition in Her Majesty's Indian Empire.

"Mr. Hanbury's patriotic zeal seems to be chiefly aroused by a passage in which Mr. Gladstone argues that, according to such a policy, India might have to fight our battles without having any share in our councils, [and] asks, 'Will India be content—can India be content—ought India to be content?' . . . We can conceive nothing more childish and ignoble than the notion that, because a public man warns a Ministry against a policy of danger, he is thereby inviting the danger, and making himself responsible for it. We heard far too much of this contemptible doctrine during the debates on the unhappy Royal Titles Bill."—*D. N.* June 4th.

recollect that the power of making war, down to this deplorable case of what in mockery is called a Conservative Government, down to this unexampled case, which I hope will be regarded by all future generations as an instance of the lowest point to which we can descend; but for this unexampled case, you cannot show me an instance, I believe, in the whole of your history where the executive power abused its trust, or either made a war, or endeavoured to make a war, except one for which—I do not say whether right or wrong, whether wise or unwise—but except one on which the mind of the people was fully and anxiously wishing to enter. —*Mr. Gladstone*, May 8th.[1]

We have found ourselves as a disagreeable consequence of this most disagreeable controversy, landed in a constitutional dispute. Doctrines have been advanced on which I have had the opportunity of pronouncing my opinion elsewhere—doctrines which I venture to say to you and to those you represent it is really important that you should examine and should weigh. . . . . What these doctrines are we know now perfectly well. The first legal advisers of the Crown have declared them, one of them in one House of Parliament, with some sense of prudent reserve; the other, with a frank and ingenuous boldness which, in my opinion, does him personal honour, and by which he has laid us under no inconsiderable obligation.[2] . . . . . It is well for you to consider this as citizens of this country, if it is to continue a free country still.—*Mr. Gladstone*, May 23rd.[3]

e. Ministers at the Congress.—The presence of the Prime Minister and of Lord Salisbury at the Congress raised another aspect of the Constitutional Question.

It is said that Lord Beaconsfield will go to Berlin as the representative of England. It is even asserted that he will be accompanied by Lord Salisbury. . . . . The decisions are sure to be [the Premier's] decisions, and not those of the Ministry. . . . . It is a sufficient objection to the arrangement that it is manifestly part and parcel of the system of personal government which is being introduced wherever an opportunity presents itself. . . . . The seat of Government will be for a time practically removed to Berlin. The possibility of bringing the joint wisdom of the Cabinet to bear on the many important unforeseen questions which may turn up in the course of the discussions in the Congress will be gone if the Cabinet is to be split into two parts. . . . . And what is still more objectionable, the arrangement will be a virtual recognition of the principle asserted by some supporters of the Government, that foreign affairs stand in quite a different category from domestic politics, and that they are the proper business of only the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.—*D. N.* June 3rd.

[1] At Hawarden, *ante*, p. 424.
[2] See Sir John Holker's speech in *H. of C.* May 21st.
[3] To the Scotch divines, *ante*, p. 424.

Lord Granville, on May 3rd, after offering his congratulations on the approaching meeting of the Congress, alluded to the appointment of the two Ministers as plenipotentiaries, adding that he could not equally congratulate the House upon that determination. Lord Beaconsfield professed not to be able to understand the objection that the other members of the Ministry would be reduced to ciphers—"when it seems to me rather that the consequence of our absence will be to increase their importance and responsibility."

Earl Grey thought the step inconsistent with the principle of collective Cabinet responsibility, and dwelt on the importance of verbal consultation. In the House of Commons, Lord Hartington made a similar criticism,[1] and was met by Sir Stafford Northcote with the assurance that all questions likely to arise had been discussed in the fullest manner.

The *Times* thought the dilemmas, very fairly raised by the Opposition, might be not less fairly overborne by material considerations of convenience and despatch of business. Germany and Austria will be represented by their Chancellors, and Russia probably by her Chief Minister. In these circumstances it is desirable that this country should be represented by plenipotentiaries of equal authority, and a precedent must, if necessary, be created.—(June 4th.)

The *Daily Telegraph* approves of both Ministers going out, and boasts of the vindication of a great principle of public law.—(June 4th.)

The *Standard* thought Lord Beaconsfield's *persiflage* hardly suited to the seriousness of the occasion. The plain truth must be told. One of two things must infallibly occur. Either Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury carry the Cabinet with them, by annihilating the influence of that portion which they leave behind, or the decisions at which they may arrive will have to be submitted to their colleagues in England for approbation. Are the eleven merely to endorse and register the conclusions of the other two? We shall assuredly and not without some reason, once more hear the cry of "The Constitution in danger!" should such be the alternative selected.—(June 4th.)

Could England be represented by *bonâ fide* plenipotentiaries possessing absolute powers, there are no two personages to whom the representation of this country should sooner be intrusted than Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury. But plenipotentiaries they cannot be, by the very law and principle of our Constitution. They ought to be no more competent to answer for England's

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 18.

decision on suddenly raised points, or suddenly suggested compromises, than Lord Lyons and Lord Odo Russell would have been. But, whereas these would have referred their joint decision to the consideration of the Cabinet at home, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury will have to refer to a Cabinet which will be hardly a Cabinet at all in consequence of their own absence from it.—(June 5th.)

[Lord Beaconsfield by his defence, founded on the action of other Powers, betrays his motive.] He is introducing personal government in foreign affairs, and he imitates the countries in which, as regards foreign affairs, this personal government is most complete. . . Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury must in any emergency act for themselves; and it seems to be intended that they shall do so. This, of course, means that Lord Beaconsfield will do as he likes. The public will be told, perhaps, as it was in the case of the employment of the Indian soldiers without the consent of Parliament, that there is a power of rejection reserved. But it is a very different thing to revise or reject a decision already arrived at, and to influence that decision while it is in the course of formation. This latter influence is the one which the Cabinet is bound by constitutional precedent to exert; and in failing to do so, and giving up the whole direction of the negotiations to two of their number, they are raising a most serious constitutional question on which the country may have to decide at a future time.—*D. N.* June 4th.

We are to trust ourselves entirely in their hands, not knowing beforehand what they purpose, nor having any power to affect their course while they are there. . . . It is, however, worth noting as an illustration of the new forms and new methods introduced by the present Administration that we in this country are almost entirely ignorant what policy our Government will adopt in the Congress. This want of knowledge makes the appointment of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury the more significant. We may, of course, be mistaken, but it seems to us to indicate that some startling proposals may be put forward with all the force of national sanction that such a representation may be supposed to give.—*D. N.* June 5th.

The Cabinet will, of course, unanimously assent to anything and everything that Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury may agree to. They will be accessories after the fact. But this is not what is meant by collective Ministerial responsibility, which is evaded in substance while it is observed in show and seeming.

As far as we can see there is absolutely no security at all in the present case for the control of Lord Beaconsfield by any representative English body, whether the Tory party in the House of Commons or the country at large. It may be that the influence of the Crown will greatly guide Lord Beaconsfield—more even than he guides the policy of the Crown. . . Everything that the Government have done has been of a nature to deprive

> Parliament of its influence over the course of this question. . . . . And now Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury are going to Berlin to take part in a Congress of the first importance to the future of the Empire, while no one who is not in the Cabinet knows in the least whether the policy they are about to support be the policy of Lord Salisbury's despatch, . . . or the policy of Mr. Gladstone's speeches as some of the Conservative organs, and especially of the Turkish organs, seem to think and to assert with a volley of bitter reproaches to the Government. . . Undoubtedly Lord Derby, who deprecated the absence even of the Foreign Secretary at a Congress, on the explicit ground that the Foreign Secretary's duty was to discuss every question as it arose with his colleagues, and to elicit, if necessary, the feeling of Parliament on any moot point, put forward the old constitutional view. Lord Beaconsfield, however, must not only disapprove that view but disapprove it so strongly that he wishes to mark his disapprobation in the most emphatic manner. For he decides not merely to send away the Foreign Secretary but to go himself, leaving no member of the Government at home who, on foreign questions, has any commanding authority at all.—*Spec.* June 8th.

f. Imperialism.—Thus many converging indications pointed to a tendency in high quarters to favour the methods and objects of Government which were summed up in the word "Imperialism." "Imperialism," in its essence, consists of an exaltation of the military side of the State, together with a corresponding depression of parliamentary institutions.[1] Its realisation would be, for England, a revolution of a most momentous character. Yet the vast extension of our foreign dependencies suggests that we may already, half unconsciously, be in the way of assuming the *rôle* of a cosmopolitan military Empire,[2] while from time to time elements of opinion appear amongst us which seem sympathetic to a development of "Imperialism" in our policy at home and abroad.[3]

The Constitutional questionings which had become so urgent in the first half of 1878 were all summed up in the question of "Imperialism." The Premier was credited, if not with a formed design, yet with a certain willingness to depress and degrade Parliament—"the imperfect vicariate of what is called a representative government."[4] He was credited with an aspiration for a state of things in which a favoured Minister, rejoicing in the intimate confidence of the monarch, would be free to conduct the

[1] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 40.
[2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 17.
[3] *Ante*, vol. i. chap. iii. § 4, "British Interests," § 6, "Disraeli-Toryism," and § 7, "Foreign Office Toryism."
[4] *Coningsby*, book v. chap. viii.

foreign affairs of the country in accordance with the dictates of a high policy inaccessible to the mere creatures of representative institutions.

To attenuate the control of the people and Parliament of the United Kingdom over the foreign policy of "the Empire" (to use the term which now came into vogue)[1] was fast becoming to be regarded as an essential element in the policy of which Lord Beaconsfield was regarded as the prime mover.

> [When Liberals accuse the favourite Minister of the Tories of a tendency towards personal government, the serious] meaning is not, as some people artfully assume, that Lord Beaconsfield wishes to make of the Queen a despot who can govern by mere orders, or can decide a criminal case as James I. did; but that he desires in all foreign and most "Imperial" affairs, to strengthen the Executive to the injury of Parliament, to intrust all serious business to a minute group of advisers, and to deprive Parliament of its deliberative powers, though not of its power of veto. Liberals who think thus say that Lord Beaconsfield is intent upon some policy in the Eastern Question to which he desires to commit the country in advance without consulting Parliament, and without, it is strongly suspected, the full comprehension of his whole Cabinet. . . . The whole evidence hangs together, and indicates that on questions vitally affecting the future of the country, England is now governed by a minute group of men whose chief does not consider it either necessary or expedient to take Parliament into his confidence. That is, at all events, a bold innovation on English practice, and the statesman who makes it should be very sure that when the people awake to his plans they will accord him either a formal or an informal act of indemnity.—*Spec.* May 25th.

The settlement at Berlin and the defensive alliance with Turkey brought the whole question of the ultimate control over the destiny of the country, as it is affected by our relations with foreign Powers, into prominence.

> As these perilous responsibilities come home to the nation, more and more attention will be given to the manner in which they were incurred. We have had no such example of personal government in modern times as these transactions supply. . . . The new notions of prerogative have not only been preached, but in the hands of Lord Beaconsfield have been put in practice. In the abused name of the royal prerogative the Prime Minister has contrived to impose his own personal policy on the nation. . . . The

[1] See criticism on Mr. Hardy's speech at Bradford (*ante*, p. 417). "Mr. Hardy was anxious to have it understood that we have, or, as he preferred to put it, that 'We are an Empire.'"—*D. N.* May 1st, 1878. Compare strictures on use of the word "Imperial," *ante*, vol. i. p. 65.

Crown is, of course, according to the letter of the Constitution, the treaty-making power, but the power exists on the practical understanding that it is cautiously and moderately used, and when a Prime Minister stretches it to cover his own love of personal government it is very likely to break in his hands.—*D. N.* July 10th.

Happily, all Conservatives are not of the new kind, in whose nostrils the social and diplomatic successes of Lord Beaconsfield are the breath of life. Many of the party still care for the theory of the Constitution. . . . They do not care to see the country committed to a scheme of colossal "territorial aggrandisement" (for that is what the Protectorate comes to), and to a thousand unweighed responsibilities. . . . Whether the weary Titan can or cannot afford to add to "the too vast orb of his fate," the country should at least have been consulted on the matter. That the country is not consulted is only part of the whole system of personal government, which has lately been patched up—partly after German, partly after French, partly in imitation of Oriental models.—*D. N.* July 12th.

There is a story going about founded, we believe, on good authority, that when some one quoted *Tancred* two or three months ago in Lord Beaconsfield's presence, the Prime Minister remarked, "Ah, I perceive you have been reading *Tancred*. That is a work to which I refer more and more every year—not for amusement, but for instruction." [Who can avoid seeing that Lord Beaconsfield has recently so been referring to the passage in which the Emir expounds to Tancred the combination which might change the face of the world and bring back empire to the East?][1] These are all the ideas of his recent policy in germ—especially the treatment of the British Empire as having its true centre of gravity in the far East . . . and last, not least, the getting rid, to a great extent at least, by the help of Indian leverage, of "the embarrassment of the Chambers." For the last eight months at least our policy has evidently been borrowed from *Tancred*. The monarch, for anything we know, has been "magnetised." The Cabinet assuredly have been magnetised. . . . From first to last Parliament has been completely ignored, and the future determined for us without even sounding its wishes, much less asking its will. . . . [The Government policy is one which, if effectually carried out, might even restore Empire to the East. At the same time it is one which if] merely flashed before the dazzled eyes of the British populace without the slightest intention of giving practical effect to it, may very well mark the point at which a very rapid decline and fall of the British Empire is to commence. . . . To speak of a people who are so treated as self-governed is like speaking of a bride who finds herself pledged by others to a life she has never experienced with a man she has never seen as

[1] *Tancred*, book iv. chap. iii.

> self-governed. . . . [An outrage to the spirit of the Constitution has been inflicted by this *coup de main*], which promises to revolutionise from the foundation the very elements of British policy without asking a word of sanction from the British people. —*Spec.* July 13th.

The settlement at Berlin failed, as we shall see,[1] to bring the Constitutional controversy to a close. Lord Beaconsfield's course in relation to the troubles in Turkey had come to be regarded as only one special manifesto of a general policy of which other and perhaps more startling developments might shortly be looked for.

This it was which gave point and relevancy to the retrospective criticisms which were so freely employed in view of the general election of 1880, and which the Conservatives sought to brush aside as so much ancient history. If an opinion may be expressed on the point, it is that the circumstances of the interval[2] point to the conclusion that the main question at issue in the election of 1880 was this very question of "Imperialism," though people became a little apt to forget how real and important the question had been, after the decisive answer which was then given by the constituencies.

§ 9. *The New Departure.*

a. Count Schouvaloff's Mission.—In glancing at the Constitutional question raised by the bringing of the Indian troops to Malta we have somewhat overshot the course of events. Matters took a new turn, almost while the debate was proceeding on the calling out of the reserves. Prince Gortschakoff's Reply to Lord Salisbury's Circular consisted of a long memorandum annexed to a short despatch,[3] of which the main point was that the English Government should state what its wishes were. The substance of it was telegraphed to London on April 9th and published by the *Times* in a third edition, which was distributed in the House of Commons. It was at once seen that the Russian communication opened a door for further negotiations.

> The *Spectator* notes that the debate in the Commons on Tuesday was very much quieted by the distribution of this telegram. It acted as a douche of cold water.—(April 13th.)

On receiving the intimation that Russia would be willing to make concessions which would modify the Treaty of San Stefano

[1] *Post*, chap. xix. [2] *Post*, chap. xix. [3] *Turkey*, xxvii. 1878.

in the sense they desired, the English Government took a new departure, which is marked by a mission of the Russian Ambassador in England to his own Court.

> To-day Count Schouvaloff goes on a mission which may fairly be called one of peace. He goes to lay the distinct conditions and requirements of England before the Czar. He intends to return in fourteen days, and will bring the answer direct to Lord Salisbury.—*D. T.* May 8th.

b. Clearing off of "War in the Air."—Count Schouvaloff arrived at St. Petersburg on Sunday night, May 12th, and returned to London about ten days afterwards. From his return may be dated the gradual dissipation of the feeling of apprehension which had lain like a cloud over England, sometimes lifting a little, but only to settle down more loweringly than ever, from the time of the proposal of the Vote of Credit, or perhaps even from the taking of Plevna and the announcement of the early meeting of Parliament.

But now there was a general and growing feeling that the crisis had been surmounted. Once and again, to be sure, in the course of the subsequent proceedings it was said that negotiations were within an ace of being broken off, and that concession had reached its utmost limits. But each fluctuation left the ultimate result less dubious than before.

With Count Schouvaloff's mission the contention which the English Government had raised on the point of "submitting the treaty" practically drops out. A "formula" was soon discovered which removed the difficulty.[1] On May 27th Lord Salisbury stated in the House of Lords that the prospects of holding the Congress had materially improved. Attention was once more directed to the policies involved in the expected settlement; but while there was ample variety of criticism and conjecture, little was known of the line which the English Government would take, and they had completely escaped from any control.

> I must say I am one of those who have great difficulty in making out what are the differences between Russia and this country. . . . Take, again, that which I believe to be by far the worst part of the proceedings of Russia; I mean the proposal to wrest the bit of Bessarabia which now belongs to Roumania away from her. That I hold to be thoroughly bad, and I should rejoice to see the influence of England used against it. But it is not a

[1] *Ante*, p. 402.

difference between Russia and this country; it is a difference between Russia and justice, a difference between Russia and freedom, and it is not possible to suppose that it is in the power of this country to take upon herself alone the responsibility of saying to Russia, "That shall not be done." . . . We are told—I hope with truth, but I am entirely in the dark, and I am afraid that you are also—we are told that there is less probability of a new breach of European peace than there was some time ago. I heartily hope that may prove to be true. . . . However thankful we may be for escaping a terrible and world-wide calamity, I cannot overlook the mischiefs that have already been done. . . . I hold it to be a very serious evil that this country has been divided now for two years past, more sharply, more passionately, more angrily, more bitterly upon this Eastern Question than on any other occasion that I can recollect for at least the last thirty years. . . . In my opinion a very great misfortune has fallen upon us by the manner and degree in which the seeds of future animosity have been sown between two great countries. . . . I am afraid that a long time must elapse before those sentiments which three years ago prevailed in this country towards Russia and which prevailed in Russia towards England can be restored.—*Mr. Gladstone*, May 23rd.[1]

The mood of the public mind induces too great a tendency to rest and be thankful now that the prospect of a Congress has taken the place for a time of apprehensions of war. No doubt this is a great step in advance. . . . It is, however, only the beginning of a settlement, not the settlement itself. . . The object of the Congress now to meet is to provide a good government for the populations of Europe and Asia which have fallen into anarchy under Turkish misrule. It must start therefore with the welfare of the population in view; and not with the idea of Turkish restoration.—*D. N.* May 31st.

We have seen indications that the [contrary] doctrine, driven from its strongholds in European Turkey, [is] about to take refuge in the Ottoman camps of Asia. It is well therefore to raise a decided voice against it. When England goes into a European Congress it will be for the settlement of the Eastern Question, and not for the rehabilitation of Turkey.—*D. N.* June 1st.

We need scarcely say that we should see with great regret the retrocession of Bessarabia to Russia. Yet we should certainly not commit the folly of urging our countrymen to make the Bessabarian question a *casus belli* between them and Russia. . . . This country, while wishing well to everybody, and profoundly anxious that good government and religious toleration should everywhere prevail, may have to fall back upon the old narrow programme of seeing that its own peculiar interests are not invaded. . . . We should like to help the Roumanians, the Greeks, the Servians, the Montenegrins

[1] To the Scotch ministers, *ante*, p. 424.

—and we will endeavour to do so. But we cannot do this at the cost of war either with Austria or with Russia. But we can and shall stand by our own interests, at the cost of war with it matters not whom. That is the difference between philanthropy and patriotism, between a cosmopolitan and a national policy. This it is which Mr. Gladstone and those whose minds he has thrown off their balance have never understood. They will have to understand it yet. We have a generous and sentimental interest in the races of the Balkan peninsula; and we will do all we can for them short of fighting for them. We have a practical interest in Constantinople, the Straits, and Asia Minor; and we should fight to the death to prevent Russia from becoming master at any of these points. It is a matter of obligation for us to do so. If Turkey will allow us to help to set that portion of her house in order of which we cannot allow her to be dispossessed by Russia, we shall be ready to undertake the task. But we cannot declare war against the Sultan if he refuses to allow us to interfere, and prefers his own misgovernment to our tutelage. . . . Diplomacy will have a busy time of it for some months, perhaps for some years hence. England's main duty, however, will have been performed, for the Eastern Question will not have been settled in a Russian sense. That is all it is in our power to prevent or to do with certainty. But it is idle to suppose that, once having baffled Russian ambition, we wish ill to any race, any religion, or any community on earth.—*St.* June 1st.

The success of the Congress depends [Mr. Gladstone thinks[1]] on its undertaking the work in a spirit of paramount regard for local liberties and based upon their amplitude and solidity. Such a policy, if adopted by the Government at the Congress, would, Mr. Gladstone says, cause our past controversies to be forgotten like the sorrows of a child. But the Government has as yet given no grounds to hope that it will adopt this broad and liberal policy; and its noisiest supporters expect from it everything but this. Of all the Powers who go into the Congress, England will, if her representatives embody her real interests and purpose, show the most disinterested desire for the welfare of the populations of the East. But in order to do so, Lord Beaconsfield must give up all ideas of the balance of power, and take up the policy which he has hitherto resisted, and which the chief supporters of the Government, in and out of Parliament, have constantly denounced.—*D. N.* June 5th.

[The article by Midhat Pasha[2] indicates what the Congress should not do with regard to Bulgaria.] He wants a small tributary Bulgaria to be formed north of the Balkans, dominated by the fortresses of the Quadrilateral, which are to remain in Turkish hands.—*D. N.* June 6th.

[1] The reference is to Mr. Gladstone's important article, "Liberty in the East and West," *19th Cent.* June, 1878.

[2] "The Past, Present, and Future of Turkey," *19th Cent.* June, 1878.

c. The Secret Agreement.—The settlement which the English Government had in view, or rather one term of it, was somewhat prematurely disclosed.

On May 30th Lord Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff signed two Memoranda. By these instruments it was arranged on the one hand that the limits proposed for the "Big" Bulgaria should be restricted, and that the province should be cut in two (the southern half having a merely "administrative," and not a "political" autonomy); while the question of the right of the Sultan (on which the English Government insisted) to maintain a certain military control of it, and to garrison the Balkan passes, was reserved. It was arranged, on the other hand, that England should not resist the cession to Russia of the port of Batoum and of Bessarabia.

The substance of this agreement became known to the editors of the *Globe*, and a summary of it was published in that newspaper on Friday afternoon, May 31st.[1]

At the next meeting of the House of Lords the publication in the *Globe* was alluded to only to be discredited.

> *The Marquis of Salisbury* :—The statement to which the noble earl refers, and a great many other statements which I have seen, are wholly unauthentic, and are not deserving of any confidence on your lordships' parts.
>
> *Earl Grey* :—I referred especially to the statement that England deplored, but would not oppose, the retrocession of Bessarabia, which appeared to me so preposterous that I could not for a moment believe it.[2]—*H. of L.* June 3rd.

> [It is useless] to discuss details of Russo-English agreements before we have some good ground for believing that any such agreements exist. If they do exist—at least in the precise and definite form ascribed to them in these rumours—so much the worse. The English Government could not have concluded them without entering upon a course of policy from which they stand pledged to abstain.—*P. M. G.* June 3rd.

> The *Daily News*, while accepting Lord Salisbury's reply as a denial that any such agreement actually existed, speaks of the

[1] With regard to the question of the Turkish troops, the summary simply stated they were to withdraw from the autonomous province south of the Balkans, and not to re-enter it. See Lord Salisbury's reference to this point, *post*, p. 460.

[2] See Earl Grey's letter in *Times*, June 18th, where he complains that the answer was calculated to convey to his mind an entirely false impression, and had prevented his calling the attention of the House, before the plenipotentiaries proceeded to the Congress, to the loss of character this country must suffer from being a consenting party to the spoliation of Roumania.

statement in the *Globe* as a significant guess, which perhaps shows the way in which negotiations are tending. For its own part it would be well content with some such solution as that pointed to. —(June 6th.)

On June 14th, the Berlin Congress having assembled, the *Globe* said there was no longer any reason why the full text of the agreement should be withheld, and published the following statement and version of the text.[1]

The Agreement comprises two Memorandums. The title of the first memorandum is:—"Project of a Memorandum determining the points upon which an understanding has been established between the Governments of Russia and Great Britain, and which will serve as a mutual engagement for the Russian and English Plenipotentiaries at the Congress."

After a preamble expressing the desire of the Russian and English Governments to establish an understanding that may obviate the settlement of the Eastern Question by the sword, the Memorandum goes on to state:—

[TRANSLATION.]

1. England discards the longitudinal division of Bulgaria, but the representative of Russia reserves to himself to point out the advantages of it to the Congress, promising, nevertheless, not to insist upon it against the definitive opinion of England.

2. The arrangement of the boundaries of Southern Bulgaria should be modified in such a manner as to remove them from the Ægean Sea, according to the southern delimitation of the Bulgarian provinces, proposed by the Conference of Constantinople. This does not concern the question of the frontiers so much as it refers to the exclusion of the littoral of the Ægean Sea, that is to say, to the west of Lagos. From this point to the coast of the Black Sea the discussion of the frontier will remain free.

3. The western frontiers of Bulgaria should be rectified upon the base of nationalities, so as to exclude from that province the non-Bulgarian populations. The western frontiers of Bulgaria ought not to pass in principle a line traced from close to Novi-Bazar to Koursha Balkan.

4. The Bulgaria replaced in the limits which are mentioned in the points 2 and 3 shall be divided into two provinces, namely:—

The one to the north of the Balkans should be endowed with political autonomy, under the government of a Prince, and the other, to the south of the Balkans, should receive a large measure of administrative self-government (*autonomie administrative*)—

[1] The *Globe* also published the text in French. As the agreement is not included in the parliamentary papers, the English text, as it appeared in the *Globe*, is printed here at full length.

The agreement is given in the Appendix to the *Annual Register* for 1878, under the title of "The Secret Despatch."

for instance, like that which exists in English colonies—with a Christian Governor named with the acquiescence of Europe for five to ten years.

5. The Emperor of Russia attaches a peculiar importance to the retreat of the Turkish army from Southern Bulgaria. His Majesty does not see any security or guarantee for the Bulgarian population in the future if the Ottoman troops are maintained there.

Lord Salisbury accepts the retreat of the Turkish troops from Southern Bulgaria, but Russia will not object to what is enacted by the Congress respecting the mode and the cases where the Turkish troops would be allowed to enter the southern province to resist an insurrection or invasion, whether in a state of execution or in a state of menace.

England, nevertheless, reserves to herself to insist at the Congress on the right of the Sultan to be able to canton troops on the frontiers of Southern Bulgaria.

The representative of Russia reserves to himself at the Congress complete liberty in the discussion of this last proposition of Lord Salisbury.

6. The British Government demands that the superior officers (*chefs supérieurs*) of the militia in Southern Bulgaria should be named by the Porte with the consent of Europe.

7. The promises concerning Armenia stipulated by the Preliminary Treaty of San Stefano should not be made exclusively to Russia, but to England also.

8. The Government of Her Britannic Majesty taking, as well as the Imperial Government, a warm interest in the future organisation of the Greek provinces of the Balkan Peninsula, the Article XV. of the Preliminary Treaty of San Stefano shall be modified in such a manner that the other Powers, and notably England, may have, like Russia, a consulting voice in the future organisation of Epirus, Thessaly, and the other Christian provinces resting under the dominion of the Porte.

9. In so far as the war indemnity is concerned His Majesty the Emperor has never had the intention of converting it into territorial annexations, and he does not refuse to give assurances in this respect.

It is understood that the war indemnity will not deprive the English Government of their rights as creditor, and it will in this respect remain in the same state that it stood before the war.

Without contesting the final decision which Russia will take with respect to the amount of the indemnity, England reserves to herself to point out to the Congress the serious objections which she sees to it.

10. As to the valley of Alashkert and the town of Bayazid, that valley being the great transit route for Persia, and having an immense value in the eyes of the Turks, His Majesty the Emperor consents to restore it to them, but he has demanded and

obtained in exchange the cession to Persia of the little territory of Khotour, which the Commissioners of the two mediatory courts have found just to restore to the Shah.

11. The Government of Her Britannic Majesty would have to express its profound regret in the event of Russia insisting definitively upon the retrocession of Bessarabia. As, however, it is sufficiently established that the other signatories to the Treaty of Paris are not ready to sustain by arms the delimitation of Roumania stipulated in that treaty, England does not find herself sufficiently interested in this question to be authorised to encourage alone the responsibility of opposing herself to the change proposed, and thus she binds herself not to dispute the decision in this sense.

In consenting not to contest the desire of the Emperor of Russia to occupy the port of Batoum and to guard his conquests in Armenia, the Government of Her Majesty do not hide from themselves that grave dangers, menacing the tranquillity of the populations of Turkey in Asia, may result in the future by this extension of the Russian frontier. But Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the duty of protecting the Ottoman Empire from this danger, which henceforth will rest largely (*d'une mesure spéciale*) upon England, can be effected without exposing Europe to the calamities of a fresh war. At the same time the Government of the Queen take cognisance of the assurance given by His Imperial Majesty that in the future the Russian frontier will be no more extended on the side of Turkey in Asia. Her Majesty's Government being consequently of opinion that the modifications of the Treaty of San Stefano approved of in this Memorandum suffice to mitigate the objections that they find in the treaty in its actual form, engage themselves not to dispute the articles of the Preliminary Treaty of San Stefano which are not modified by the ten preceding points, if, after the articles have been duly discussed in Congress, Russia persists in maintaining them.

It may be that during the discussions in Congress the two Governments may find it preferable to introduce of a common accord fresh modifications which it would be impossible to foresee, but if the understanding respecting these new modifications be not established between the Russian and English Plenipotentiaries, the present Memorandum is destined to serve as a mutual engagement in Congress for the Plenipotentiaries of Russia and Great Britain.

In faith of which this document has been signed by the Russian Ambassador at London, and the Principal Secretary of State of Her Britannic Majesty. Done at London the 30th May, 1878.

(Signed) SCHOUVALOFF.
SALISBURY.

The Second Memorandum forms an annex to the first, and was signed by both Plenipotentiaries on the same date. It runs as follows:—

Besides the stipulations of the preceding Memorandum, the

British Government reserve to themselves to point out to the Congress the following points:—

(*a*) The English Government reserve to themselves to demand of the Congress the participation of Europe in the administrative organisation of the two Bulgarian provinces.

(*b*) The English Government will discuss in Congress the duration and the nature of the Russian occupation of Bulgaria and of the passage through Roumania.

(*c*) The name to be given to the Southern Province.

(*d*) Without touching on the territorial question, the British Government reserve to themselves to discuss the questions of the navigation of the Danube, in which matter England has rights by treaty.

(*e*) The English Government reserve to themselves to discuss in Congress all questions relative to the Straits. But the Russian Ambassador at London takes cognisance of the verbal communication which he has made to the Principal Secretary of State, that is to say, the Imperial Cabinet stands by the declaration of Lord Derby of the 6th May, 1877, and notably:—

"The existing arrangements made under European sanction, which regulate the navigation of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, appear to them (the British Government) wise and salutary, and there would be, in their judgment, serious objections to their alteration in any material particular."

And the Russian Plenipotentiary will insist at the Congress on the *status quo*.

(*f*) The English Government will address to His Majesty the Sultan a request to promise Europe to protect equally on Mount Athos the monks of other nationalities.

(Signed) SCHOUVALOFF.
SALISBURY.
—*Globe*, June 14th.

Questions were renewed in Parliament[1] and Ministers stated in both Houses that the publication was unauthorised by the Government, and that as an explanation of their policy the statement was "incomplete and therefore inaccurate."

How the publication had occurred was for some days a mystery, for it was evidently distasteful to the English Government. There were some who jumped to the conclusion that it was to be traced to a Russian intrigue.

> . . . Russia having, as she imagined, tied the hands of England effectually by the inchoate conclusion of the Agreement, and still more by its publication.—*St.* June 24th.

It soon appeared, however, that the information had been

[1] June 14th and 17th.

supplied by a writer employed in a subordinate capacity at the Foreign Office.[1]

Subsequently, when challenged by Lord Rosebery, who called the attention of the House of Lords to the Secret Agreement, Lord Salisbury justified the manner in which he had spoken of the summary of that instrument which appeared in the *Globe*.

> I described it as unauthentic simply because it was so, and because no other adjective accurately described it, and I shall be able to state why I so described it and what was the justification for that description. . . . The whole contest and conflict at that time and later between Russia and ourselves in these negotiations was the military power to be given to the Sultan south of the Balkans. . . . The point on which we found it impossible to agree was our contention that the Sultan should have full power of militarily defending the provinces assigned to him. Therefore in the understanding which we came to with the Russian Government this point was carefully and deliberately reserved for further discussion at the Congress, the Russian Government well knowing we were resolved to insist on it, and that it was a point on which we could not yield. As a matter of fact, when we came to the Congress the matter was earnestly contested, and the negotiations at one time seemed in danger of breaking off, but at last we obtained our point, security for the military supremacy of the Sultan in the provinces south of the Balkans. That was the keystone and essential part of our policy. . . . [The summary] was supposed to contain the substance of our agreement, but this summary represented us as giving up that point altogether, and stated that we had assented that the Turkish troops should be withdrawn, and should not return. It was thus in the most

[1] It was attempted, without success, to make the writer in question, Mr. Charles Marvin, criminally responsible, and he appeared before Mr. Vaughan, at Bow Street Police Court, on July 9th and again on July 16th, when he was discharged.

As to the summary of May 30th, the magistrate said it was perfectly clear that it was an effort of memory. It was simply the carrying away in his memory of a document which the defendant had had an opportunity of seeing while he was engaged in copying out those papers in the office. The magistrate alluded to the circumstance of the defendant's belief that the matter was to be immediately made public, as appearing by the evidence, and as extenuating what struck him at first as a great breach of trust committed by the defendant. The document which appeared in the *Globe* of June 14th must have been copied *literatim*, but it did not appear where it was copied, or under what circumstances the defendant could possibly have had access to it.

Mr. Marvin subsequently wrote a long letter, in which he explains that he left the Foreign Office on May 30th with the impression that the agreement was to be made known to Parliament that evening, and that under these circumstances he thought it was no derogation of duty to convey the information to the *Globe*. The agreement was, he said, not "secret and confidential," *i.e.* one of those intended never to be divulged, as was a certain document signed on the afternoon of May 31st, the nature of which he would not even hint at. The publication of the full text on June 14th was a reply to Lord Salisbury's denial that the summary of May 30th was worthy of confidence, and was in vindication of his reputation as a contributor of reliable news.—(See *Mr. Marvin* in *D. N.* Aug. 1st.)

essential points absolutely an untrue description of what it professed to represent. If *Hamlet* was represented without the part of Hamlet, I should describe that as an unauthentic representation, and for the same reason I should describe a summary of the agreement which left out the most essential point as an unauthentic document. That is my statement as to why I called it an unauthentic document, and I should do so again in similar circumstances. [As to Lord Rosebery's bitter reproaches because we will not lay this document and other documents illustrating it on the table of the House] the production of confidential documents depends entirely on the consent of the person whose confidence you have been enjoying. We have applied for leave to produce the matter which we think essential to illustrate these documents, and that leave has been refused.—*Lord Salisbury*, *H. of L.* July 26th.[1]

Lord Granville wanted to know where would they have been had it not been for the immoral act of this writer. They would have been absolute dupes. They would have had the Blue Books and read the instructions of Lord Odo Russell, the protocols and other documents, and everything containing full information, but they would have been perfectly duped as to the way in which Her Majesty's Government had proceeded.—*H. of L.* July 26th.

Sir Stafford Northcote, in answer to questions put by Mr. Evelyn Ashley, refused to say there was no secret agreement signed at the Foreign Office on May 31st, but stated there was no document signed on that day having reference to the affairs of Greece.—*H. of C.* Aug. 2nd.

The revelation of the Secret Agreement came as a painful surprise to not a few of those who had been on the side of the Government in the most recent phase of the controversy. Some had been looking to the Government to reverse entirely the Turkish surrender embodied in the Treaty of San Stefano; others had been impressed by the attitude they had taken up with regard to the enforcing of treaties; and whether the Secret Agreement was regarded from the one point or the other, it could not but meet with strong disapproval.

That the original announcement in the *Globe* should turn out substantially correct, notwithstanding Lord Salisbury's disclaimer, added to the bitterness of the feeling, and the part which Lord Salisbury himself had played was the subject of many severe strictures.

[1] The Duke of Argyll says the agreement is one "which has never been communicated to Parliament, and which, if the Government could have helped it, would never have seen the light," vol. ii. p. 100.

This agreement is not only a surrender of the good and strong principle asserted in the original English conditions of entering Congress, but it is a complete *bouleversement* of that principle. . . . Great, indeed, is the descent from "the lofty moral position". . . . We may at least be allowed to ask, perhaps, that evasive and misleading statements should be abandoned. Nothing can justify the sort of answers given by Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote on the subject of this agreement hitherto.—*P. M. G.* June 15th.

English policy has quitted the straight path; it has deserted the safe and honourable principle of collective European action for the dangerous and vicious principle of separate understanding and backstairs bargaining; [Russia] has gained a victory for her diplomacy and a future sanction for pernicious diplomatic methods which would be ill compensated by any material advantages which the Congress is likely to have in store for ourselves.—*P. M. G.* June 17th.

A few weeks ago both our own people and the other nations of Europe were led to believe that England was going to resume her more generous policy of older times. The attitude she seemed determined to take in maintaining the authority of treaties and opposing a barrier to wrong and violence was hailed with general applause at home and abroad. . . . How little did I suspect that while such high language was being publicly held by the Government a private negotiation was being carried on with Russia by which we have assented to the greater part of what was most objectionable in the Treaty of San Stefano, and are made accomplices in the flagitious spoliation of Roumania.—*Earl Grey* in *T.* June 18th.

The publication of the Memorandum between England and Russia has undoubtedly produced a great and an unfavourable sensation in the diplomatic circles of Europe. . . . The general opinion seems to be that the British Government, in entering into this preliminary arrangement with Russia, have not only surrendered the high ground of European law and equity, but have departed from the position so plainly laid down in that memorable State paper which, more than any act of ours during this controversy, has won for this country the sympathy and the confidence of Europe. . . . But though we decline to admit the censure of Europe at large in regard to this act of Her Majesty's Government, the case would be very different, so far as concerns the people of this country, if the published compact were to be taken to be the whole of what the Government have done in defence of the national interests. In this document we find that some of those interests are wholly uncared for, some but imperfectly understood, others surrendered, or so vaguely provided for as to load us with new and indefinite responsibilities. It is therefore with considerable anxiety and misgivings that we listen to explanations of

which the purport is that the published document is inaccurate only because it is incomplete, and unauthentic only because it was surreptitious.—*St.* June 18th.

Such criticisms as these did little or nothing to weaken the authority of the Government, which seemed to be established on too firm a basis to be affected by them.

It is impossible not to take note of the angry feelings and expressions of disappointment and chagrin which the Memoranda of May 30th have called forth. They are declared by friends of the Ministry to be "a shameful departure" from the line of policy laid down in Lord Salisbury's despatch and many Ministerial speeches.—*D. N.* June 19th.

An attempt on the part of a few men of extreme Turkophile views, among whom Lord Robert Montagu appears to have been the leading spirit, who met at the Langham Hotel to organise a protest against the policy of a separate agreement with Russia, came to nothing.[1]

[The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary] seem to have set their own party half wild with disappointment, while even the prudence of some of their arrangements has not induced their habitual opponents to condone the weakness and injustice of others.—*D. N.* June 22nd.

On the other hand the Government did not lack supporters to apologise for the course which they had adopted. It was pointed out that by the efforts of the English Government the "Big Bulgaria" had been got rid of; that there were still points which might be discussed and modified in the Congress; and that Russia had acknowledged that England had a right to a guardianship of Asia Minor, while the *Daily Telegraph* almost gloated over the region rescued, and restored, as it would have its readers believe, to the Sultan in Roumelia.

The *Globe* says a triumph has been secured for England in maintaining the rule of the Straits. The agreement is not to be regarded as superseding the deliberations of the Congress, though, by laying down certain concessions, it has obviated the danger of war.—(June 14th.)

It is quite natural that more than one party should be disappointed by the agreement between England and Russia. It must be profoundly displeasing to that faction at St. Petersburg which thought even the Treaty of San Stefano too mild. . . The Memorandum is equally displeasing, perhaps, to some of our own

[1] See *D. N.* and *St.* June 22nd.

countrymen. . . . What, it is asked, has the Government gained by obtaining the vote of credit for six millions, by bringing the Indian troops to Malta, and by constituting itself the champion of international law? The answer is very simple. In the first place, if our Government had not used firm language and made military preparations, the Russians might have done much more than enforce the Treaty of San Stefano. . . . [In the next place] Constantinople is emancipated from influences which might have been fatal to its independence. It will be left in possession of territory not only considerably larger than the portion which was specified in the Treaty of San Stefano, but stretching along the coast of the Ægean. . . . The Northern [Bulgaria] stretching from the Danube to the Balkans, will, it is true, be virtually independent of Constantinople; but such a change had been made inevitable by the war. The Southern Bulgaria, on the other hand, will not receive much greater powers of self-government than those suggested by the preliminary Conference of Constantinople. The two Bulgarias will not be so large as the one marked out at San Stefano. . . . But still more important are the stipulations with respect to the Asiatic provinces. . . . Russia puts her seal to a document which unequivocally states that England may assert a right of guardianship over Asia Minor.—*T.* June 17th.

The Turkish envoys are perfectly satisfied with the proceedings which have hitherto taken place, and agree completely with the English view of the points thus far submitted to the Plenipotentiaries. . . . Opening suddenly upon them with all the vividness of a panorama, the remodelled map of Turkey in Europe, as Austria and England consent to it, has been exhibited; and, so far from being disposed to question the wisdom of British counsels, they are, we learn, content. Indeed, great as is the loss which they must suffer as the representatives of the Ottoman Power by the cession of the wide-spreading lands of Bulgaria north of the Balkans, it cannot be but with feelings of satisfaction that they regard the assured salvage of the rich district lying south of that famous range. A very Garden of Eden is still their possession—a land literally "flowing with milk and honey," where the roses give forth the richest perfume; where the maize grows higher, the flax stronger, and the tobacco plant more luxuriantly than anywhere else besides; where, until war devastated the country, cattle covered the hills and wheat filled the barns; the peasantry, despite all tales of Turkish oppression, being so notably well-to-do as to excite the envy of even the bitterest enemies of the tolerant Pashas. . . . The possibilities for the country south of the Balkans are practically illimitable, and if the district be saved to the Turks, as there is every reason to hope it may yet be, enterprise and energy should speedily convert it into a treasury of wealth. . . . [Yet] the value of what they lose must not be underestimated. If they save the rich districts which lie south of the Balkans, together with the littoral of the Ægean and

perhaps the Euxine they are yet robbed of the fair possession which skirts the Danube, with the great fortresses of that river. —*D. T.* June 20th.

Meanwhile those who had hitherto been most strenuous in opposing the Government, and in support of a "violet" policy, could watch the development of events with some satisfaction in the prospect that peace between England and Russia would be maintained, and that a solution would be agreed to which, at all events, carried some measure of emancipation south of the Balkans. But this satisfaction was tempered by regret that the interference of the English Government should render the solution less complete than it otherwise might have been, and by distrust of what might lie behind the ominous reference to the special duty of England to protect Turkey in Asia.

[It is to be feared that the compromise, though it certainly does not efface the whole of General Ignatieff's work, diminishes the chance of a growth of a really powerful State which would resent alike dictation or interference from Russia or the Porte. The gravest blot on the Treaty of San Stefano was the stipulation with regard to Bessarabia. This was a serious offence against the rules of common justice as between nations] but the Foreign Secretary often speaks much stronger than he really thinks; and he is content in the agreement to record his profound regret. . . . Of course, the wounded feelings of the war party in this country may be healed by the announcement that England is to assume, in a special manner, the protectorate of the Ottoman Empire in Asia. We can only hope that Lord Salisbury put his name to this extravagant proposition only on the distinct understanding with the Prime Minister that it meant little.—*D. N.* June 15th.

§ 10. *The Berlin Congress and Treaty.*

Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury arrived at Berlin on June 11th. With them Lord Odo Russell[1] was associated as a third plenipotentiary. The first sitting of the Congress took place on the 13th, and Prince Bismarck was chosen President.[2]

Attention in England was now concentrated on the long telegrams which the Berlin correspondents of the English newspapers forwarded from day to day, recounting what could be gathered of the proceedings, taking note of the length of the sittings, and eagerly watching the more significant informal meetings of the diplomatists.

[1] The English ambassador at Berlin, raised to the peerage as Lord Ampthill in 1881.

[2] See *Turkey*, xxxix. 1878, for the protocols, and see Argyll, ii. pp. 144 foll. for account and criticism of the proceedings of the Congress.

Enough transpired to make it plain at home that the English plenipotentiaries were struggling for the policy of Lord Beaconsfield, and that Lord Beaconsfield was making it his leading object to save as much as could be saved for Turkey.[1]

> Lord Beaconsfield in particular is an object of endless curiosity. When he appears at his window to sniff the morning air, people flock from all the surrounding streets to get a glimpse of him; when he descends to his carriage for a drive his way is blocked up by crowds of impertinent idlers. I just met him walking in the little park near his hotel, and he was followed by scores of picturesque characters, whom the police were forced every few minutes to disperse. He is the lion of the hour. . . . He watches his prerogative here as jealously as Queen Elizabeth, and his own view of his prerogative leaves very little discretion for the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The short speech which his lordship made on Thursday is said to have electrified his hearers. . . . Lord Beaconsfield occupies a position here unique and isolated. Others may have no special affection for the Russians; he alone still defends the Turks. Others may be in doubt how the inevitable dissolution of the Turkish Empire may be brought about with the least shock to Europe. Lord Beaconsfield alone denies that that dissolution is inevitable, will have the Turkish Empire restored, and will do this out of positive, personal, perhaps ethnological, sympathy for the Turks themselves. . . . It is a melancholy, a pitiable spectacle to see him seriously, even passionately, arguing here at Berlin for the reconstruction of the Turkish Empire. . . . The whole details of the English case here are in the hands of Lord Beaconsfield. Lord Salisbury is simply ignored. The latter is with Lord Odo Russell, whither the English Foreign Office has practically been transferred. Mr. Cross's temporary appointment is merely nominal. But while Lord Salisbury is thus attending to the routine work of his department quite as if he were in London, Lord Beaconsfield parades in the character of the great European statesman.—*Berlin Correspondent in D. N.* June 18th.

> The *Standard Correspondent* warns that war is still possible. The English plenipotentiaries, Lord Beaconsfield especially, came to uphold the view that the direct influence of Russia, whether administrative or military, must be rigidly excluded from both Bulgarias, and that Turkey must in addition retain sufficient control to preserve the means of prolonged existence. Upon these points Lord Beaconsfield is not to be moved, and the plenipotentiaries have been greatly struck with the precise and forcible language in which he presents and adheres to this central idea of his mind.—(*In St.* June 21st.)

[1] Compare the strictures on the attitude of the English plenipotentiaries contained in Mr. Gladstone's speech, *H. of C. post*, p. 484.

> It is agreeable to witness a revival of national satisfaction and self-reliance in this country since it has become obvious that the hands of the English negotiators have not been altogether tied by the Schouvaloff-Salisbury agreement. Early last week, as soon indeed as the public opinion of Englishmen had made itself unmistakably felt, the interchange of sentiments at the Berlin Council Board seems to have become suddenly strained and checked.—*St.* June 24th.

Lord Beaconsfield forcibly expressed his own conception at the thirteenth sitting of the Congress, taking as his text the proposal of the French and Italian plenipotentiaries for a rectification of frontier in relation to the claims of Greece to Epirus and Thessaly.

> His Excellency, seeking for the motives of this attitude, thinks that it should be attributed to the false idea that was formed after the conclusion of the Treaty of San Stefano, as to the principles which should guide the Congress. An erroneous opinion attributed to the Congress the intention to proceed to the partition of a worn-out State ("*Etat vieilli*"), and not to strengthen, as the high assembly had done, an ancient empire which it considers essential to the maintenance of peace. It is true that often after a great war territorial rearrangements are brought about. Turkey is not the only State that has sustained territorial losses; England herself has lost provinces to which she attached great value, and which she regrets to this day. The word "partition" cannot be applied to such arrangements and retrocessions, and the Greek Government was entirely mistaken as to the views of Europe. His Excellency took this occasion to repel the insinuations of a part of the press which had described as a partition the decision of the Congress upon the subject of Bosnia and the Herzegovine. It is, on the contrary, for the purpose of preventing a partition that this decision has been taken.—*Turkey*, xxxix. 1878, p. 197.

Meanwhile there were two points which threatened to bring about the rupture, often imminent, as often averted, between England and Russia. These were the claims which Lord Beaconsfield advanced that Turkey should have the right to garrison the Balkan passes,[1] and the resistance which Lord Beaconsfield offered to the cession of Batoum.

The question of the military control of Turkey over the "Southern Bulgaria" of the Secret Agreement, and especially the right of Turkey to garrison the Balkan frontier, was raised in the second sitting,[2] by Lord Salisbury, but no agreement could be arrived at. The discussion was adjourned, Prince Bismarck recommending that an agreement should be sought in private and

[1] See Lord Salisbury's speech in *H. of L.* July 26th, *ante*, p. 460.
[2] June 17th.

informal meetings, and meanwhile a courier was despatched to St. Petersburg to take the pleasure of the Czar. On Friday, June 21st, a correspondent telegraphed saying that a crisis had arrived—the discussion was making no progress. On the reply the courier carried with him would depend whether the Congress should continue its sittings or be summarily closed.[1] The next day,[2] Russia conceded the right of the Sultan to garrison the frontiers of Eastern Roumelia and of the Governor-general of the province to call in the Ottoman troops in case of need, but desired guarantees that the interior should only be occupied by national militia. This gave rise to further discussion, but in the sixth sitting it was arranged that no Bashi-Bazouks should be employed, and that the regulars on their way to the frontier should not linger nor be billeted on the inhabitants, and further, that if the Ottoman troops should be called in on emergency, that the step should be notified to the Powers.[3]

> It was late last Friday when the news reached Berlin that the great concession was to be made, and it was in the sitting of Saturday that in obedience to instructions from St. Petersburg the final plunge was taken.—*T.* June 24th.
>
> The clouds have rolled away, and the prospect of a substantial, durable, and fairly satisfactory peace is greatly improved. The firmness of the English plenipotentiaries, who were quite prepared to quit the Congress rather than annihilate Turkey in Europe in advance for the benefit of the traditional prospects of Russia, has triumphed.—*Berlin telegram in St.* June 24th.
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> If Lord Beaconsfield had done no more than secure the acquiescence of the Congress in the main requirement for which he has been contending, he would have achieved a success which must prove morally decisive.—*T.* June 25th.
>
> The people of England have been so long trained in habits of concession, and so little accustomed these many years to triumphs of diplomacy, that it is natural for them to receive the news of Lord Beaconsfield's successful stand against Russia on the point of Bulgaria with a surprise, passing quickly into somewhat exaggerated congratulation. . . . Our Berlin correspondent has permitted himself to be led into an exalted and rapturous strain when writing of Lord Beaconsfield's creditable diplomatic victory. . . . We have to learn, however, a good deal more of the terms on which this concession has been won before we can pronounce it to be altogether "glorious." . . . They are congratulated on having "saved so much," because apparently it was supposed that they

[1] *St.* June 22nd.
[2] Fourth sitting, June 22nd.
[3] See protocols fourth and sixth sitting, and articles xv. and xvi. of Treaty of Berlin.

> would save little or nothing. It is precisely because we believe that we can save a good deal, and that at least we should try to do so . . . that we somewhat demur to the extravagant terms in which this first success of the British plenipotentiaries has been spoken of. . . . The purchase of the line of the Balkans for Turkey at the cost of Bessarabia or of Batoum is a bargain of which we may speedily have to repent.—*St.* June 25th.

These concessions on the part of Russia were not, it seems, made with the good will of Prince Gortschakoff. Prince Schouvaloff, on the other hand, it appears was disposed to conciliation. Prince Gortschakoff's absences from several sittings of the Congress, and an attack of gout from which he was reported to be suffering, attracted a good deal of comment.

Once more it seemed possible that Lord Beaconsfield might make shipwreck of the Congress on the question of Batoum. It was hinted that this attitude was adopted rather for the sake of some of his more bellicose supporters at home than for the sake of the matter in dispute itself.[1] It was noted on July 3rd,[2] that the question of Batoum had lately assumed a serious, perhaps even an ominous, importance, while two days later the English newspapers[3] spoke of differences, reported to be so great as to threaten a serious rupture.

> The one encouraging fact in the news about Batoum is that there still remain differences of opinion upon it between Russia and England, which seems to imply that the Project of Memorandum is not held to be of binding force, or that there really do exist those subsequent and supplementary agreements which have been darkly spoken of as tending to neutralise the published document.—*St.* July 5th.

But on the question of Batoum Lord Beaconsfield yielded.[4] Yet it seems that there was a real danger that England might have been engaged in war to prevent this port from passing into the hands of Russia.

> It is certain that if the difficulty about Batoum had presented itself at the commencement of the Congress, instead of the close, the proceedings would have come to an end. The skilful president purposely reserved it for the last.—*Berlin telegram in D. N.* July 8th.

[1] Telegrams in *D. N.* July 2nd and 4th. Compare Lord Beaconsfield's minimising of the importance of Batoum. "It will hold three considerable ships, and if it were packed like the London Docks it might hold six."—*H. of L.* July 18th. The accuracy of this description was controverted by Lord Granville on July 23rd, and further references to the matter took place in the House of Lords on July 25th and 26th.

[2] Telegram in *D. N.* July 4th.

[3] *Standard* leading article, July 5th.

[4] See *post*, p. 475 (*note*), as to the stipulation respecting the character of the port.

> There was a condition of peace so vital that Lord Beaconsfield was prepared to risk the arbitrament of war upon it. That was the maintenance of a Turkish Empire in Europe. Russia gave way, and Turkey still exists, able to reform and to defend herself. Are these substantial fruits of victory to be imperilled, and all the miseries of war to be lightly faced, for the sake of a little harbour on the Black Sea, of which not one in a hundred of those who talk about it now had ever heard the name some weeks ago? . . . It is plain that Lord Beaconsfield struggled hard to rescue Batoum from Russia's clutches; but we conclude that the engagements taken by the luckless Project of Memorandum were too strong for him. Accordingly, Batoum will be a Russian harbour —under conditions.—*St.* July 8th.

Some of the anti-Russian party still retained, it seems, a faint hope that the territory of the Laz settlements might be "saved," as they phrased it, though they were no longer prepared to argue that absorption by Russia should be made a *casus belli*.[1] This hope, however, was not destined to be fulfilled, and the territory passed under the dominion of Russia, though not without an attempt of the Lazes themselves to resist the transfer.[2]

At the twentieth sitting, on July 13th, the Congress proceeded to the signature of the Treaty of Berlin, and separated.

[1] *St.* July 8th. It remarks that the Laz settlements, although mostly inland, furnish the best sailors of the Black Sea.

[2] *Ante*, p. 351.

TABLE

TO SHOW

THE SALIENT POINTS OF THE TREATY OF BERLIN, AND A COMPARISON OF ITS PROVISIONS WITH THOSE OF THE TREATY OF SAN STEFANO.

Art.	Provisions of the Treaty of Berlin.	Effect produced on provisions of Treaty of San Stefano.
I. to III.	"Bulgaria" north of the Balkans (roughly), with Sofia, constituted an autonomous and tributary[1] Principality, with a Christian Government and national militia. The prince to be elected by the population, subject to the confirmation of the Porte. Members of reigning houses of the Great Powers ineligible.	The "Big Bulgaria" cut in two. The southern portion restricted in area, and kept from extending to the Ægean Sea. This portion to have "administrative autonomy" only.
	South of the Balkans, "Eastern Roumelia" constituted as a new province under the direct political and military authority of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan under conditions of administrative autonomy.	
XIII. to XIX.	Eastern Roumelia to have a Christian Governor-General named by the Porte with the assent of the Powers, for a term of five years. His powers and functions to be determined by a European Commission.	Instead of a Russian Commission to superintend the introduction into the "Big Bulgaria," and the working for two years of the new system.
	The Sultan to have a military control of Eastern Roumelia consisting (1) in his right to maintain troops (but not irregulars) on the frontiers,[2] and (2) to appoint officers of a local militia; and (3) in the right of the Governor-General to summon Ottoman troops if the internal or external security of the province should be threatened, such step to be notified by the Porte to the ambassadors of the Powers.	"Eastern Roumelia" to be nominally under the military control of the Sultan, instead of the Sultan's having a mere right of way for regular troops to and from provinces beyond the "Big Bulgaria."

Art.	Provisions of the Treaty of Berlin.	Effect produced on provisions of Treaty of San Stefano.
XXII.	The period of occupation of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia by a Russian army of 50,000 men restricted to nine months.	Instead of approximately two years.
XXIII.	The organic law of 1868 to be scrupulously applied to Crete.	Like Treaty of San Stefano.
	Similar laws adapted to local necessities to be introduced into other parts of the Turkish Empire not specially provided for by the Treaty.[3]	Instead of into Epirus, Thessaly, and other parts of Turkey in Europe.
	The Porte to advise with the European Commission instituted for Eastern Roumelia before promulgating the new laws.	Instead of with the Imperial Government of Russia.
XXIV.	The Powers reserve to themselves the right to mediate between Turkey and Greece if they fail to agree to a rectification of frontier as recommended by the 13th protocol of the Congress.[4]	New.
XXV.	Bosnia and Herzegovina to be occupied and administered by Austria-Hungary.	Instead of local reforms.
XXVI. to XXIX.	Independence of Montenegro recognised by all the Powers who had not yet admitted it.	Like Treaty of San Stefano.
	Montenegro not to have ship or flag of war.	New.
	Religious liberty to be allowed.	New.
	An accession of territory to Montenegro.[5]	Somewhat cut down.
XXXIV. to XXXVI.	Independence of Servia recognised, subject to a condition that religious liberty shall be allowed.	Like Treaty of San Stefano.
	An accession of territory to Servia.	Condition new. Somewhat cut down.

Art.	Provisions of the Treaty of Berlin.	Effect produced on provisions of Treaty of San Stefano.
XLIII. to XLV.	Independence of Roumania recognised, subject to conditions (1) that religious liberty shall be allowed; (2) that part of Bessarabia shall be ceded to Russia.	Like Treaty of San Stefano. Condition new. Cession of territory to Russia like Treaty of San Stefano.
LII.	Fortifications on the banks of the Danube from the Iron Gates to its mouth to be razed.[6] No vessel of war to be allowed on the Danube below the Iron Gates (with exception for light vessels, and for the "stationaires"[7] of the Powers at the mouths of the river, as far as Galatz).	Like Treaty of San Stefano.
XLIV.	Cession to Roumania of territory, consisting of the islands forming the delta of the Danube, and the territory, as far as a line from Silistria to the Black Sea, south of Mangalia.[8]	Like Treaty of San Stefano.
LVIII.	Cession to Russia of the territory of Ardahan, Kars, and Batoum, in Armenia.	Somewhat cut down, Turkey regaining the valley of Alaschkerd and the town of Bayazid.
LIX.	The Czar declares his intention to erect Batoum[9] into a free port, essentially commercial.	New.
LX.	Cession by Turkey to Persia of the town and territory of Khotour.	Instead of the Porte's taking the question "into serious consideration."
LXI.	The Porte undertakes to carry out reforms in the provinces inhabited by Armenians. These reforms to be communicated to the Powers, who will superintend their application.[10]	Instead of engagement with Russia to carry out improvements and reforms.

Art.	Provisions of the Treaty of Berlin.	Effect produced on provisions of Treaty of San Stefano.
LXII.	The Powers take note of a declaration of the Porte expressive of its wish to maintain the principle of religious liberty.	Treaty of San Stefano contains provisions in favour of Russian ecclesiastics, &c.
LXIII.	The Treaty of Paris and the Treaty of London to be maintained in all their provisions, which are not abrogated or modified by the stipulations contained in the Treaty of Berlin.	New.

NOTES TO TABLE.

[1] The *Times*, November 12th, 1885, publishes a communication from its correspondent at Nish, in which the writer, premising that the Treaty of Berlin was not intact up to the date of the *coup d' état* in Roumelia, continues—"Let us see for a moment what was the condition of this great instrument just before the Bulgarian escapade," and proceeds to consider *seriatim* various clauses which had been evaded or violated. With reference to the tribute (the amount of which was to be settled by the signatory Powers at the close of the first year of the new organisation) he writes:—"The 9th clause, which imposes a tribute upon Bulgaria, and a contribution to the Public Debt of Turkey, remained in complete abeyance, the Russian ambassador refusing to assist in bringing it to a settlement. Necessarily Clauses 33 and 42, which imposed a like contribution upon Montenegro and Servia, also remain unexecuted." The amounts of the Montenegrin and Servian contributions to the Turkish debt were to be settled by the Powers in concert with the Porte.

[2] It appears that the Sultan did not in fact maintain any garrisons in Eastern Roumelia up to the time of the revolution there in the autumn of 1885.

[3] This provision, like Art. lxi., appears to have remained a dead letter.

[4] The Turks showed no inclination to come to the suggested arrangement with Greece. After Mr. Gladstone's accession to office, in the spring of 1880, Sir Henry Layard was replaced at Constantinople by Mr. Goschen (May 26th), and the questions of the Greek and Montenegrin frontiers, and that of reforms in Armenia, were taken up with increased vigour. The new Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville, appealed to the signatory Powers to join in concert in impressing on Turkey the necessity of fulfilling her obligations. A Conference met at Berlin (June 16th—July 1st, 1880), in which a new Greco-Turkish frontier was agreed on. However, some of the Powers which had joined in a "naval demonstration" for the purpose of compelling Turkey to carry out the agreed cession to Montenegro (see note 5 to Arts. xxvi.–xxix. *post*) refused to concur in likewise enforcing their decision as to the Greek frontier by a continuance of the naval demonstration; and this was accordingly dropped.

At the beginning of 1881 the question of the Greek frontier, still unsettled, had

become a "burning" one. Meanwhile the Albanian League had gained strength, and strongly resisted the cession of the Albanian territory in Epirus to Greece.

A Conference at Constantinople between the ambassadors of the Six Powers and Ottoman delegates was arranged. It met from March 7th to March 27th; and ended in accepting a frontier much less favourable to Greece than the line of the Berlin Conference of 1880. The Greeks protested, and war between Greece and Turkey was only just averted by the action of the Powers. At last the Greeks yielded. Dervish Pasha defeated 10,000 Albanians in a pitched battle on April 20th A convention was signed on May 24th, and the Greeks gradually occupied the ceded territory during the months from July to November.—(See *Annual Register*, 1880 and 1881.)

[5] The question of the Montenegrin frontier remained open till 1880. In the spring it seemed that a compromise, proposed by the Italian Minister at Constantinople, might be effected, but it came to nothing, owing to the evasions of the Turks, who allowed the Albanians to occupy the positions as fast as they themselves abandoned them. To various identic notes the Turks replied by urging the difficulty of abandoning their Albanian subjects. After the Conference at Berlin in the summer (*ante*, note 4 to Art. xxiv.) the Six Powers resolved on a show of force. An international fleet assembled on September 14th and proceeded to Dulcigno. The Porte at first seemed obdurate, but on October 12th they promised to yield on the Montenegrin question, apparently on an understanding with France and Germany that the naval demonstration should not proceed. On November 24th the Turkish general dispossessed the Albanians, and handed over Dulcigno to Montenegro.—(See *Annual Register*, 1880.)

[6] [The Clause] which stipulates the demolition of the Danubian fortresses has never been strictly executed in the letter or spirit of the Treaty.—*T.* Nov. 12th, 1885.

[7] See Art. 19 Treaty of Paris, *ante*, vol. i. p. 145.

[8] The provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano with respect to the balance of the indemnity left outstanding (*ante*, p. 379), provisions which constituted one of the English objections to that treaty (*ante*, p. 407), were not touched by the Treaty of Berlin.

The matter, however, was raised in the Congress. In the despatch of July 13th, in which Lord Salisbury sums up the results of the Congress, he writes on this point as follows:—"The pecuniary indemnity, to which many objections were taken by Her Majesty's Government, has been excluded altogether from the Treaty of Berlin. The Congress declined to revise a contract which was no infraction of the Treaty of Paris, and which it was therefore within the competence of two independent Powers to conclude. But declarations were made in Congress and are recorded upon the Protocol which profoundly modify its practical effect. The Russian plenipotentiaries declared that Russia would not seek to annex territory in satisfaction of the indemnity, and that they would not contend that it should be preferred either to debts guaranteed by other Governments, or to debts in respect to which Turkish revenues had been hypothecated. The English plenipotentiaries declared that they could not recognise in the indemnity any claim of priority over the debts of any kind which were anterior to it in date. It results from these declarations that Turkey is not internationally bound, and cannot be compelled to pay any portion of the indemnity until the claims of all the creditors of loans anterior to the war have been paid in full. If the prosperity of Turkey should ever increase to such a height as to satisfy this condition, then the indemnity may be undoubtedly demanded. But in such a contingency it will no longer be a disproportional, or even a heavy burden upon the finances of Turkey. The stipulation must be regarded as one which in its actual form is not contrary to international law, but of which the performance must, in the nature of things, be postponed to a period infinitely remote."—*Turkey*, xxxviii., 1878.

[9] The 59th Clause, in which the Czar declares his intention of making Batoum into a purely commercial port, had been fairly and squarely broken, for as soon as Russia got the place into her hands, she proceeded to fortify it, and to make it the purely naval and military stronghold that it is to-day.—*T.* Nov. 12th, 1885.

[10] The only result of Article lxi. was to bring about such a persecution of the Armenians that while hundreds were thrown into prison, many hundreds more were driven into voluntary exile and settled in the newly organised States in what was lately European Turkey.—*Ibid.*

§ 11. *The Anglo-Turkish Convention.*

But the Treaty of Berlin comprised one side only of the settlement which the English Government contemplated. As we have seen, there was a shrewd suspicion abroad that there was something behind the Salisbury-Schouvaloff agreement. When, therefore, immediately following the news that the English plenipotentiaries had consented to the retention of Batoum by Russia, the announcement was made that England had entered into a Convention with Turkey, this was received, so to speak, as a surprise for which people were looking out.

In fact, on the very day that the Salisbury-Schouvaloff agreement was concluded, the English Government, by way of counter-blast, instructed their ambassador at Constantinople to propose to the Porte a Convention of defensive alliance, and this was signed on June 4th by Mr. Layard, as English plenipotentiary, and by Safvet Pasha, the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The important article ran as follows:—

> ART. I.—If Batoum, Ardahan, Kars, or any of them shall be retained by Russia, and if any attempt shall be made at any future time by Russia to take possession of any further territories of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan in Asia, as fixed by the Definitive Treaty of Peace, England engages to join His Imperial Majesty the Sultan in defending them by force of arms.
>
> In return His Imperial Majesty the Sultan promises to England to introduce necessary reforms, to be agreed upon later between the two Powers, into the government and for the protection of the Christian and other subjects of the Porte in these territories: and in order to enable England to make necessary provision for executing her engagement, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan further consents to assign the island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England.—*Anglo-Turkish Convention.*

No sooner was the hope of saving Batoum in the Congress extinguished than the English Government produced the Anglo-Turkish Convention. Questions were asked respecting it in both Houses on Monday July 8th, and the correspondence[1] was published at length in the morning papers of July 9th.

The English Government, it seemed, was anxious to exhibit the prospects opened by the Convention as a "compensation" which might reconcile England to the gains of Russia. While this view of the transaction was put forward by a portion of the press, there

[1] *Turkey*, xxxvi. 1878.

were many who, on the other hand, regarded the Convention as a *damnosa hereditas.*

The great *coup de théâtre* which we had been long expecting was announced to Parliament yesterday, and the papers laid on the table will be found in another column. We warned our readers more than once that they must look for some startling stroke of policy in the direction of the Sultan's Asiatic dominions. . . . Lord Beaconsfield has pledged England without her consent and even without her knowledge to assume the protectorate of the Sultan's dominions in Asia. In consideration of this undertaking England has a promise of reforms in the government of the Porte's Christian and other subjects, and the island of Cyprus is assigned to her to be occupied and administered by England. . . . Some such arrangement had long been guessed at and talked of. . . . It can hardly be said, therefore, that the statement made to Parliament yesterday created much surprise. But it brought with it a shock nevertheless. Even those who had long believed it likely that some such stroke of policy was in contemplation by the Government must have felt deeply impressed when the authoritative announcement was made, and they learned that the thing had been actually done, and that Lord Beaconsfield had with a stroke of the pen revolutionised the foreign policy of England. We object alike to the thing that is done and to the manner of doing it. England has been led blindfold into this tremendous responsibility. . . . The plain truth is that we have had thrust upon us a task involving limitless cost, unceasing stress, strain, and danger, a sort of task which, we may fairly say, has never in history been satisfactorily performed, or ended in anything but failure, and that this has been put upon England without her consent, without her knowledge, and in disregard of the settled practices of her constitutional system.—*D. N.* July 9th.

While the Congress is occupied in finishing its work at Berlin, it suddenly finds itself no longer the chief centre of European interest. Other issues, with which it has no direct concern, have suddenly been brought to the front, and negotiations which were opened amid a kind of breathless expectation and suspense seem likely to close in partial neglect. The announcement made in Parliament on Monday evening has been like the opportune turning of a kaleidoscope or the shifting of a scene. It has brought another stage before us and other players. The interests of Greeks and Bulgarians and even of Lazes have become secondary to those of Cypriotes, and Armenians, and Turcomans. This shifting of public attention was probably not altogether undesigned. [The desolation of Turkish tyranny reigns over the cities and lands of Asia Minor.] Whether we shall be able, while perpetuating that domination and upholding it, to modify it, or to change it, must be a serious question for Parliament and the country. We have accepted a tremendous responsibility, without

adequate means of fulfilling it, on quite insufficient grounds of policy, and under no urgency of duty.—*D. N.* July 11th.

The secret was revealed on Monday, and is a big one.—*Spec.* July 13th.

The interest so long sustained and so deeply felt in the proceedings of the Congress has been eclipsed by the attention suddenly attracted to itself by England's Defensive Treaty with Turkey. The controversy respecting the merits of this startling stroke of policy does not abate, and England is favoured from all sides with comments, flattering or the reverse, on Lord Beaconsfield's most recent achievement. We see no reason to modify the opinion we yesterday expressed, that it has already been recognised by the more unbiased portion of the Prime Minister's countrymen as a happy and ingenious escape from that which all persons felt was a vexing difficulty, and which many regarded as an intolerable position.—*St.* July 12th.

Within a few days the English flag was hoisted in Cyprus.

§ 12. *Peace with Honour.*

The dictatorship culminates with the return of Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury, as if from the scene of a great achievement, on the afternoon of Tuesday, July 16th.

As soon as the packet which was bringing back the two English plenipotentiaries touched the pier at Dover, the Mayor and Corporation stepped on board to present the Premier with a congratulatory address. The Premier, in making his acknowledgments, claimed to have brought back "Peace with Honour" (a catching phrase which struck the keynote of the strain wherewith his supporters thenceforth sang his praises), and demanded recognition for Lord Salisbury's share in this result as equal to his own.

Other addresses of welcome and congratulation followed, and the Ministers proceeded by special train to London. The Charing Cross Station had been decorated in their honour, and was crowded with spectators who closely packed the tiers of seats which had been erected. The arrival of the Ministers was greeted with ringing cheers. They were received upon the platform by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, in their robes of office, and a distinguished company. Something of the air of a triumph was given to their progress along the crowded way to Downing Street.

In response to the cheers of the throng Lord Beaconsfield appeared at a window, and repeated the phrase which he had used at Dover.

> Lord Salisbury and I have brought you back peace, I hope with honour, and such a peace as will satisfy our Sovereign and add to the fame of our country.—*Lord Beaconsfield*, July 17th.

In all this we seem to catch the impression of a straining to magnify Lord Beaconsfield's personality and to identify him with the diplomatic triumph which men strove so hard to persuade each other he had achieved for England at Berlin.

> [The Premier had for a generation been the leader of a great party, which he conducted through a period of depression to a position of unquestioned supremacy.] But to-day, at the close of a long and doubtful struggle, a still more extraordinary success crowns the career of the Prime Minister. He returns from discharging the office of chief plenipotentiary of England in the most important and most critical negotiation of our time, and he has discharged it to the satisfaction of his own country and with the general applause of Europe. He has, at all events, averted a terrible war; he has at the same time maintained the dignity and the authority of his country; and he has in all probability established affairs in the East upon a basis on which a really stable edifice may be erected. Lord Beaconsfield will be welcomed in London to-day as the chief actor in one of the most honourable triumphs in the modern diplomacy of England.—*T.* July 16th.
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> [Perhaps the very zenith of a successful career was reached when, on the 18th, the Prime Minister rose to justify the policy and the results of his share in the Congress of Berlin to an audience as brilliant probably as ever listened to an orator in the House of Lords.]—*D. N.* July 19th.
>
> In the triumph of Tuesday Lord Beaconsfield's captive sat with him in the chariot, and was permitted and even constrained by the magnanimity of the victor to share the honours showered upon him. And his troops—well, they surely were the streams of populace which lined the pavements, and which had fought Lord Beaconsfield's battle four years ago, when none of us knew how the victory he was then gaining would be used. . . . The fear is that the wonder of the thing will hardly be adequately realised even by the most passionate of Lord Beaconsfield's admirers. If the shrewdest political thinker in England had been told thirty years ago that the bizarre and flashy novelist, who had just given to the world *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred*, would within a generation be not only ruling England, but ruling England on the lines of the ideas set forth in that very extraordinary series of political primers, . . . we cannot doubt that the shrewd political thinker we have supposed would have treated such a

prophecy as the raving of a lunatic. Yet that is exactly what has happened. As Lord Beaconsfield sat in his carriage, with the captive of his bow and spear, Lord Salisbury, at his side, acknowledging the flatteries poured upon him, and expressing his belief that he had brought back "peace with honour" to the British people, he must have been conscious that he had really achieved miracles.—*Spec.* July 20th.

Further honours followed thick and fast. On July 22nd, Lord Beaconsfield was invested with the Order of the Garter. On Saturday the 27th[1] the two Ministers were entertained at a banquet given by a numerous body of Conservative peers and members of the House of Commons. The entertainment was held in the Duke of Wellington's Riding School at Knightsbridge, as the only building in the West End which could afford sufficient accommodation. Conspicuous among the mottoes with which the hall was decorated was "Peace with Honour." On August 3rd the Premier and Foreign Secretary were presented with the Freedom of the City of London at the Guildhall, and in the evening they were entertained by the Lord Mayor at a banquet at the Mansion House. Lord Salisbury's words suggest that after the country had been "thrilled" for two years and a half, the "longing for action"[2] had plainly given place to a yearning for quiet; while the speech of the Premier on this occasion reads like the epilogue of a great drama of which he spoke the prologue on Lord Mayor's Day, 1875,[3] and of which he himself was the hero.

It is a satisfaction to think that, for good or for evil, I hope that we have done with the Eastern Question in English politics. I never remember a question which has so deeply excited the English people, moved their passions so thoroughly, and produced such profound divisions and such rancorous animosity. At all events, I hope that now, whether we have done wholly good or wholly evil, or something between the two, we are entering upon a gentler period of contemporary politics.—*Lord Salisbury*, Aug. 3rd.

My Lord Mayor,—It is nearly three years ago since I stated to one of your predecessors—I think in this hall—that there were some disturbances in a distant province of the Turkish Empire which could not be looked upon without a conviction that they might become more serious. . . . Well, my lord, since that time things have happened of great moment. For the last two years

[1] It was on this occasion that Lord Beaconsfield spoke of Mr. Gladstone as a "sophistical rhetorician inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity." Lord Granville took the Premier to task (H. of L., July 29th) and the latter replied. (See note, *ante* p. 329.)

[2] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 58.

[3] Vol. i. p. 235.

an impending general war has been apprehended by every country. There has been the absolute occurrence of a great war, limited, no doubt, in its area, but stupendous and sanguinary. There have been fears, and well-grounded fears, that the balance of power in the Mediterranean, in which England is so deeply interested, might be subverted. There have been fears that Russia would establish ports on the Ægean, and that the restriction on the navigation of the Straits, which had been looked upon as a cardinal point by this country, was about to be abolished. There were apprehensions, and well-founded apprehensions, that Asia Minor was about to be conquered, and that the establishment and influence of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf would be seriously endangered. . . . The outcome has been a general peace in Europe—a peace which I believe will be enduring. . . . My lord, I hope the time has come that when I and my colleagues are sharing your hospitality, our conversation after dinner will no longer be of wars and rumours of wars. It has been my fate for several years on these occasions to offer a warning voice to my country; and I am happy—I would even say proud—to feel that the time has proved that the warnings that I offered were not without a reason. But I trust that time has now passed, and that in the future it will be upon the revival of trade and the development of industry and the arts of civilisation that I shall have to address, periodically, the chief magistrate of the greatest city in the world.—*Lord Beaconsfield*, Aug. 3rd.

§ 13. *Lord Beaconsfield's Solution.*

(*a.*) *Criticisms of the Opposition.*—The assumption which gave point to Lord Beaconsfield's boast, was the assumption that England had been engaged in a mighty struggle, in which her honour and her interests had compelled her to resist the pretensions of Russia. In the eyes of the many by whom this version was now accepted, Lord Beaconsfield became his country's champion. Disapproval of his course, nay, even slackness in supporting him, was held little short of treason.

[England was supposed to be alone.] It might be she had some justice on her side, but she had not the nations, and when England was weak, it was just the time, I should think, when a patriotic man would have said, "I will stand by my country." [But no; the terrible election which placed Mr. Disraeli in power, could never be forgotten. It must be punished by every means, by every pettifogging argument, which could destroy the efforts of the Government and make it difficult for them to succeed.] In spite of all this—I am really speaking the truth—in spite of all this, a bold and sagacious spirit held up Lord Beaconsfield. He stood steadily to his ground; he lifted up his colours; and although he

> is called not an Englishman, but a foreigner, he held up the cross of St. George in a way that no other Englishman at that time could do. He did do it, and he succeeded. Before him the Russian quailed. . . . In the most difficult state of the case in a most painful condition of England's affairs, when the world was hung in the balance between England and Russia, then Lord Derby took the occasion to desert his country. . . . When I heard Lord Derby had deserted his friend—his old friend, Mr. Disraeli—in the painful crisis of his country's fate, I felt as if my son had turned his back on the day of battle.—*Mr. Roebuck at Sheffield*, June 17th.

After the return from Berlin a chorus of congratulation was raised on the "peace" and the "honour" which Lord Beaconsfield was supposed to have secured. It was loudly insisted that a great triumph had been won; that the position of England as a Great Power had been reasserted; and that the affair had been conducted to an issue in the main satisfactory to this country, notwithstanding enormous difficulties which had had to be overcome.

> We in our diplomacy had to struggle against a loud-mouthed diplomacy struggling in another direction out-of-doors. . . . When it was of vital importance that Europe should understand that England was in earnest, every nerve was strained to make England seem infirm of purpose and impotent in action. . . . [Another reason, apart from the details of the settlement, which has predisposed the English people in our favour, is that] they have felt that, however imperfectly, we were striving to pick up the thread—the broken thread—of England's old Imperial position. —*Lord Salisbury, Knightsbridge banquet*, July 27th.

The efforts of the Opposition were now mainly directed to push home the questions, "What merit to have preserved peace, when peace was needlessly, nay, wantonly endangered?" "The restriction of the Big Bulgaria, and the convention with Turkey, which are claimed as 'honours'; —do these things really redound to the honour or the interests of this country?"

It happened that Mr. Gladstone was enforcing these topics on the attention of the Southwark Liberals[1] on the same evening that Mr. Forster was applying himself to them at a dinner of the Cobden Club, and promising a discussion in Parliament.

> We are going in the House to make what protest we can. We shall not succeed; there will be a very large majority, probably, against us. I am sorry for it; but that fact does not for one moment discourage me from making that protest. I dare say

[1] At the first anniversary meeting of the Southwark Liberal Association, Saturday, July 20th, *post*, pp. 487, 490, and 509.

> that some of you will think that during the negotiations, during the last few months, we ought not to have been careless about divisions. I am not surprised at your thinking so; perhaps if I had foreseen what has now happened I should have thought the same. But, remember, the circumstances were then very different from what they are now. . . . But whether we were right or wrong, these fears do not apply to the present circumstances. The only thing we have to consider now is whether it is our duty to make this protest, to take a division, and to care but little comparatively about the majority against us.—*Mr. Forster*, July 20th.

In the House of Lords, although there were debates of considerable importance,[1] no division took place. In the House of Commons, Lord Hartington moved a resolution, which gave expression to the main contentions of the critics of the Government.[2] It was debated for four nights,[3] and a division was taken, when 338 members supported the Government and 195 voted for the resolution. This was the last of the parliamentary pitched battles on the Turkish policy of the Government, and their majority now reached its high-water mark.[4]

(*b.*) *Complexity of the Solution.*—The Treaty of Berlin and the Anglo-Turkish Convention together constituted the solution which had been arrived at for the pending question. But if from this point of view the Treaty and the Convention constituted one event, this event was a complex one, and presented a double aspect. Thus when we seek to examine what relation this solution bore to the various factors of Public Opinion which had begun to be

[1] On the following occasions:—July 19th, when Lord Beaconsfield laid the protocols on the table (*ante*, p. 479); July 26th, when Lord Rosebery called attention to the Secret Agreement (*ante*, p. 460); July 29th, when (in a debate initiated by Lord Stratheden and Campbell) Lord Granville took exception to the reticence of the Government in respect to the transactions in question, and Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury replied.

[2] The text of Lord Hartington's resolution ran as follows:—"That whilst this House has learned with satisfaction that the troubles which have arisen in the East of Europe have been terminated by the Treaty of Berlin without a further recourse to arms, and rejoices in the extension of the liberty and self-government of some of the populations of European Turkey, this House regrets that it has not been found practicable to deal in a satisfactory manner with the claims of the kingdom of Greece, and of the Greek subjects of the Porte; that by the assumption under the Anglo-Turkish Convention of a sole guarantee of the integrity of the remaining territories of Turkey in Asia, the military liabilities of this country have been unnecessarily extended; that the undefined engagements entered into by Her Majesty's Government in respect of the better administration of those provinces have imposed heavy responsibilities on the State, whilst no sufficient means have been indicated for securing their fulfilment; and that such engagements have been entered into, and responsibilities incurred, without the previous knowledge of Parliament."

[3] July 30th and 31st, Aug. 1st and 2nd.

[4] Their actual majority over the members who went into the Opposition lobby was of course greater on the Vote of Credit (*ante*, p. 359), but on that occasion the leaders of the Opposition withdrew.

distinguishable some two years before,[1] we must distinguish between the actual provisions which were agreed to, and the direction in which the influence of the English diplomatists was exerted.

> It is impossible to look only at the results, and to shut our eyes altogether to the course which has been pursued by the Government and the mode by which these results have been arrived at.—*Lord Hartington, H. of C.* July 29th.

With respect to the latter, the "red" policy of "Support" seemed once more to be entirely in the ascendant. Mr. Gladstone discussed the protocols at length, blaming the Government on the ground that in every instance such had been their attitude.

> For the first time in a Congress of the important Powers of Europe, as far as I know, the voice of England has not been heard in unison with the habits, the institutions, and the history of England. On every question of difficulty that arose the voice that has been heard has spoken rather in the terms of Metternich than in those of Canning or of Lord Palmerston or of Lord Russell.—*Mr. Gladstone, H. of C.* July 30th.

But the Ministers spoke with *complacency* of what had been accomplished in the way of salvage for Turkey, and in terms of extenuation and apology in respect of their acquiescence in any of the results of her defeat.

> What was to be said at a time when all the statesmen of Europe were attempting to concentrate and condense the resources of the Porte with the view of strengthening them? [An effort on the part of Turkey to despatch an army to Bosnia to deal with the elements of difficulty and danger there might ruin her new career of amelioration and tranquillity.] It was therefore thought expedient by the Congress that Austria should be invited to occupy Bosnia, and not to leave it until she had deeply laid the foundations of tranquillity and order. . . . . In consequence of that arrangement cries have been raised against our partition of Turkey. My lords, our object has been directly the reverse—our object has been to prevent partition . . . . . A country may have lost provinces, but that is not partition . . . . . A Sovereign who has not yet forfeited his capital which has not yet been occupied by her enemy, and that capital one of the strongest in the world, who has armies and fleets at his disposal, and still rules over 20,000,000 of inhabitants, cannot be described as a Power whose dominions have been partitioned . . . . . When the line of the Balkans was carried—and it was not carried till after we had had long and agitated discussions—it was said by the illustrious statesman who presided over our labours, "Turkey in Europe once more exists."—*Lord Beaconsfield, H. of L.* July 18th.

[1] *Ante*, Part II.

> Only a few months ago countless legions of [the Sultan's] foes were rattling at the very gates of his capital. His finest provinces had been conquered. [He] has now in Europe a rich and abounding country, which in area is equal to England and Wales; while in the Asiatic portion of his dominions his anxiety certainly has terminated, and he knows well that an opportunity is now given when the resources of his country may be developed with the advantage of that tranquillity which they scarcely ever enjoyed before.—*Lord Beaconsfield*, Aug. 3rd.[1]

> We had taxed, according to Lord Beaconsfield's mode of argument, the bill of costs, and made the avaricious lawyer reduce his charges.—*D. N.* July 19th.

Retrospectively, the chief thing the Ministers appeared to regret was their failure boldly to adhere to the "red" policy from the beginning, a course which they imagined would have prevented Turkey's suffering any loss whatever.[2]

> One of the results of my presence at the Congress at Berlin has been this to me, that what I always suspected I there ascertained to be an absolute fact—that neither the Crimean war nor this horrible and devastating war which has just terminated would have taken place if England had spoken with the necessary firmness.—*Lord Beaconsfield*, July 27th.[3]

The Ministers pleaded that by the changes introduced by the Treaty of Berlin, they had succeeded in obviating the objections to the Treaty of San Stefano. The changes on which they mainly relied as having accomplished this result were the following. Nearly two-thirds[4] of the "Big Bulgaria" had been replaced under the direct political and military rule of the Sultan, thus excluding the Greek populations from the Sclav Principality, and pushing back the political outposts of Russia beyond the Balkans. At the same time the Sultan's dominions had been provided with a defensible frontier far removed from his capital. But, as if to disarm criticism, while these points were dwelt on, attention was called to the careful provision against future misgovernment, and it was hinted that if Turkey threw this chance away, it would prove her last.[5]

[1] At the Mansion House.

[2] [Lord Beaconsfield] has intimated to you plainly that what the Government ought to have done was to have said to Russia, "You shall not invade Turkey."—Mr. Gladstone, March 17th, 1880 (*Midlothian*, second series, p. 11). See *post*, p. 516.

[3] At the Knightsbridge banquet.

[4] In this calculation of course the autonomous Eastern Roumelia is included, as well as Macedonia, though only the latter was subjected to actual Turkish dominion.

[5] See *Turkey*, xxxviii. 1878. This was a despatch which Lord Salisbury wrote from Berlin on the day on which the treaty was signed, addressed "in form to Her

The Ministerial explanations were far from satisfactory to some of the pro-Turkish partisans.[1]

> Lord Beaconsfield's conduct throughout the early stages of the controversy was admirable. His right hand was tied by Mr. Gladstone's fanatical agitation, and his left by timid and treacherous colleagues. Yet he denounced the fables of the massacres, the intrigues of Russia, and the treachery of Servia, and stood up for treaty-rights as against highwayman's rights. . . . Lord Beaconsfield, with the country at his back and his policy emphatically endorsed, went to Berlin. . . . Why did he surrender? For myself, I frankly admit I cannot answer. I only know that he *has* surrendered, betraying the trust reposed in him by his countrymen, and wrecking his own reputation.—*Maltman Barry in Spec.* July 13th.[2]

The acquiescence of the English Ministers in the Treaty of Berlin, relieved as it was of the most obnoxious provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano, had only been rendered possible (so the supporters of the Government seemed to understand the matter) by the conclusion of the Convention with Turkey. The Convention was the antidote to any poison which might yet lurk in the Treaty of Berlin.

> Did the Treaty of Berlin stand alone not all the bought sycophancy in the world would have saved it from utter condemnation by the Legislature and from the bitter reproaches of the nation. [That the surrender of the strongholds of Armenia to Russia] is rendered much less harmful by the Defensive Treaty and the occupation of Cyprus we were among the first to assert; but Parliament will necessarily want to know why the harm was not prevented altogether. . . . How is it that Russia, after engaging in a war that professed to be one exclusively of benevolence, has been allowed to appropriate places of notorious strength and provinces of acknowledged value. . . . Had the Government been inspired solely by its own wishes and those of the Conservative party Russia would never have acquired possession of Kars by arms, nor of Batoum by negotiation. We should have threatened to fight to prevent the one and to forbid the other. . . . The Government, however, lacked the resolution to risk the danger of having to make good their threats in face of the attitude of

Majesty's Principal Secretary of State, but in reality to the country."—*Spec.* July 20th. It was published in the London newspapers of July 17th.

[1] A petition was presented by Mr. Cowen (who took care to remark that he did not concur in its prayer) praying that the House would exhibit articles of impeachment against Lord Beaconsfield, and cause him to be arrested for high crimes and misdemeanours in order that the honour of the country might be maintained. (*H. of C.* July 25th.) This petition appears to have emanated from the "Foreign Affairs Committees" (*ante*, vol. i. p. 138) in Manchester, Keighley, and perhaps some other towns. It was regarded with some amusement.

[2] The *Spectator* heads the letter "The Internationalists and the Government." See *ante*, vol. i. p. 163, for another portion of this letter.

> their political opponents, and their want of determination was quickly perceived by Count Schouvaloff, and was not thrown away upon the Russian Government. The Czar forthwith insisted on retaining Kars and obtaining possession of Batoum. . . . It was then that feeling deeply something must be done to soothe the vexation of its followers, and appease the annoyance of the country, the Cabinet hit upon what, under the circumstances, must be described as the happy expedient of the Defensive Treaty. Had the situation in which we find ourselves been the result of the deliberate preferences of a Cabinet acting single-handed and unhampered by an unscrupulous and unpatriotic agitation, then, indeed, it would have been impossible to bestow upon its members even a portion of praise. . . . Regarded as the agents of the English nation in its integrity, the Government must be judged leniently in consequence of the distracted counsels from which the nation suffered.—*St.* July 16th.[1]

On the other hand the Opposition regarded the establishment of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia, which were the main features of the Treaty of Berlin, as a great gain, although the modifications which that treaty had introduced into the Treaty of San Stefano, (weakening the new State by cutting it in two, and handing back a large Christian population in Macedonia to the rule of Turkey), seemed to them to be modifications in the wrong direction.[2]

Still, the Treaty of Berlin effected just such a result as had been the aim of that "Emancipation policy" with which the Opposition had become identified, and that to a greater extent than had at one time seemed possible. Moreover, the extent to which this result had been lessened by the efforts of the English negotiation appeared, when the realities of the matter were looked into, to be by no means so considerable as the Ministers boasted.

> Through this bloody war, deeply to be lamented, don't let us disguise from ourselves that by the Treaty of Berlin some great results for humanity have been obtained. . . . [The Treaty of Berlin] with some very bad things[3] indeed, has done some extremely good things.—*Mr. Gladstone*, July 20th.[4]

[1] Compare *Standard* of June 18th, *ante*, p. 462.

[2] The correctness of this view is now strongly borne out by the attitude of Lord Salisbury towards the revolution in Eastern Roumelia in the autumn of 1885, and the general unanimity with which all parties seem to have recognised that it is England's true policy to promote, rather than to hinder, the union of Roumelia and Bulgaria under Prince Alexander. The danger to the peace of Europe arising from the claims of Greece in respect of the Greek provinces of Turkey points to the same conclusion (March, 1886).

[3] The worst thing in either of the two treaties (Berlin and San Stefano) was in both of them; [viz., the retrocession of a part of Bessarabia, which up to that time had enjoyed free institutions, to be governed despotically as part of the Russian empire. For this the English Government made themselves responsible by the Salisbury-Schouvaloff Memorandum] (*ante*, p. 455).—*Mr. Gladstone*, March 17th, 1880 (*Midlothian*, second series, p. 12).

[4] At Southwark, *ante*, p. 482.

In the main the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin are not repugnant to the views which have frequently been expressed by those who sit on this side of the House. We have all along believed that the Treaty of Paris was an experiment, and that it was based upon the idea that the institutions of Turkey might be reformed, and that Turkey might, after the chance which was then given her, take her place in the family of European nations. We have come to the conclusion sooner than hon. gentlemen opposite that that experiment has failed, and that some policy must be substituted for that which was the predominant policy in 1856. We have believed that the only substitute for that policy lay in the gradual development of the Christian races subject to the Porte. You may speak as you choose, and you may profess what you please about the independence, authority, and power left to Turkey; but, disguise it as you will, that which I have just indicated is the principle which is at the bottom of the Treaty of Berlin. So far as the Treaty of Berlin is a complete settlement it is in the direction of extending self-government to the races which were lately subject; so far as it is incomplete it points to a complete settlement in the same direction, and it is because we believe that it is a step, and a very long step, in the direction of the policy which we have from the very beginning of these troubles advocated upon this side of the House, that we do not repudiate but rather welcome the treaty which has been concluded. . . . If you approve of what has been done by the Congress of Berlin you approve of what has been done by the war. You yourselves tried by the Congress of Constantinople to effect by peaceful means these improvements, but that Congress had no result whatever. All that has been accomplished has been accomplished by the war, and the course we have taken has been by every means in our power to induce Her Majesty's Government and the country to refrain from going to war for the purpose of causing the abandonment of the enterprise which had been taken in hand by Russia. If you are going to vote approval of the results of the war, how is it possible we could desire any better justification for the course we have taken?—*Lord Hartington, H. of C.* July 29th.

A short time ago there was presented to Parliament a map[1] which professed to show the extent of territory restored to Turkey. So far as that map was accurate in fact, it was a fact to be deplored; but, fortunately, the restoration of territory was much more imaginary than real, and the deprivation of territory, fortunately, effective enough. — *Mr. Chamberlain, H. of C.* Aug. 1st.

You boast very much of the Treaty of Berlin, and you have absolutely persuaded your dupes in this country that that treaty is your work—the maintenance of Turkey and the resistance to Russia. The Treaty of Berlin—and let the people of this country

[1] See *Turkey*, xxxvii. 1878.

understand it, for they do not at present—the Treaty of Berlin is nothing but the Treaty of San Stefano, with a few comparatively unimportant qualifications.—*Duke of Argyll, H. of L.* May 16th, 1879.

You may remember, gentlemen, that three or four years ago utter scorn was poured upon what was called the "bag and baggage policy." Are you aware that that "bag and baggage policy" is at this moment the absolute basis upon which are regulated the whole of the civil state of things in Bulgaria and in Eastern Roumelia? . . . The despised "bag and baggage policy" is at this moment the law of Europe. . . . It appeared to me the people of England understood [the phrase] well. Nay more, the Congress of Berlin even seemed to have understood it, and found that the state of things it recommended was a state of things which had become irresistible, and which now, thank God to say it, is irreversibly established in those once unhappy provinces. . . . [The vote of six millions] did achieve one result, and I want you well to consider whether you are satisfied with it or not, especially those of you who are Conservatives. It undoubtedly cut down largely the definition of Bulgaria established by the Treaty of San Stefano. [Whether that definition was a right one depends on more minute knowledge than I possess, but the effect of so cutting it down was to put the population inhabiting Macedonia a million or a million and a-half of people, most of them Christians, who had been promised free institutions by the Treaty of San Stefano, back under the direct rule of the Sultan.]—*Mr. Gladstone*,[1] March 17th, 1880.

The Anglo-Turkish Convention, on which the Ministers relied as their great achievement, so far from reconciling the Opposition to any shortcomings in other directions, appeared to them enough of itself utterly to condemn those who were responsible for it.

By the Anglo-Turkish Treaty you have undertaken three things—the occupation and administration of Cyprus, upon which I will say nothing; . . . secondly, to defend Turkey in Asia against any attempt Russia may make; to go 2,000 miles from your own country, . . . alone and single-handed, in order to prevent Russia's making war at any time upon Turkey in Asia, or assuming or acquiring possession of any portion of Turkish territory. That is not all. You have undertaken to be responsible for the good government of what is perhaps the worst governed country in the whole world, namely, the Turkish territory in Asia, from the Dardanelles to the Persian Gulf, from the Mediterranean to the limits of Persia; and all this without your consent, without your knowledge, has been promised to be done at your expense, by the blood of your children, who may be called upon to serve Her Majesty in the army. Gentlemen, there is but one epithet which

[1] *Midlothian*, second series, p. 13.

> I think—and I do not pronounce it in a moment of excitement, but I pronounce it very calmly—there is but one epithet which I think fully describes a covenant of this kind. I think it is an insane covenant.—*Mr. Gladstone*, July 20th.[1]

There was some degree of vagueness about the splendid prospects which the Government wished it to be understood they had opened out for the country by this their great stroke. These seemed in the main to consist of our aggrandisement by the annexation of Cyprus, and perhaps by a protectorate of Asia Minor. The Government, it seemed, had secured for England a portion of the spoil.

> The occupation of Cyprus was merely following out the traditional policy of the English Government for a long time past. When the interest of Europe was centred in the conflicts that were waged in Spain, England occupied Gibraltar. When the interest of Europe was centred in the conflicts that were being waged in Italy, England occupied Malta; and now that there is a chance that the interests of Europe will be centred in Asia Minor or in Egypt, England has occupied Cyprus.—*Lord Salisbury*, Oct. 17th, 1879.[2]

The annexation of Cyprus presented itself as the acquisition of a military stronghold; but the case of Asia Minor was rather different, and dazzling expectations were excited which were by no means destined to be fulfilled.

> Two classes of persons admire the scheme from interested motives. Speculators foresee great railways, concessions, guarantees, new "outlets for capital," new shares and share-lists. . . . More innocently other persons look forward to an enlarged "Asiatic Civil Service," and to "openings for young men." They forget the premium they will have to pay for the openings and for the Civil Service. Outside the ranks of people thus moved, and outside the mere claque of the Ministerial policy, it would be difficult to find men who look without apprehension, and even awe, at the terribly heavy and complicated task which Lord Beaconsfield has set England. The feeling of pride in the greatness of the labour is damped by the uncertain nature and the myriad responsibilities of the protectorate of Asiatic Turkey.—*D. N.* July 12th.

In either case the Opposition contended the proceeding was of the worst example and fraught with the most disastrous consequences to the stability and peace of Europe.

> I wish to ask the Government how they justify as consistent with their obligations to Europe the fact that they had obtained this Convention with Turkey, which they have never submitted

[1] At Southwark, *ante*, p. 482.

[2] At Manchester.

to the Congress of Berlin, and which has never received the approval of Europe. [In what respect does the concession to us by the Sultan of certain rights of interference to secure the better government of his subjects in Asia Minor] differ from the contention which had been put forward by Russia before the Crimean war?—*Lord Hartington, H. of C.* July 29th.

Having given something to Servia and Montenegro, having given Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria, having taken the island of Cyprus for ourselves, when all these territorial changes are made, that is a process which I think cannot be described by any other name than "partition."—*Lord Derby, H. of L.* July 18th.

The claim advanced by the Ministers to have secured an advantage by the Anglo-Turkish Convention, was in one of the aspects in which the matter was presented a very remarkable one. It was nothing less than a claim to have deserved well of the country by binding it beforehand to adopt an active "red" policy, in the event of a Russian attack on the Asiatic provinces of Turkey, and by thus putting it out of the power of England (so the suggestion seemed to run), to stand on one side as she had done in 1877, when next the emergency should arise.

But, yielding to Russia what she has obtained, we say to her, "Thus far, and no farther." There is no reason for these constant wars or fears of wars between Russia and England . . . . . There is room enough for Russia and England in Asia. But the room that we require we must secure.—*Lord Beaconsfield, H. of L.* July 18th.

Lord Beaconsfield spoke of the Convention as lessening our responsibilities.—(*Knightsbridge banquet*, July 27th.)

Lord Ripon said the Government proposed to supply the want of security which was the result of the Berlin Treaty by means of a Convention which would deprive all future Governments of freedom of action. They shrank most wisely from involving this country in war on behalf of the Turks; but it was determined that for the future no Minister should exercise his discretion, because he would be compelled by this Convention to take the very course of going to war against Russia from which Her Majesty's Government shrank.

Lord Salisbury :—Whatever happens, whatever Ministry may be in power, the people of this country will never allow Russian influence to be supreme in the valleys of the Euphrates and Tigris . . . . . So far from increasing our responsibilities by what we have done, we have reduced them by clearly defining the policy the nation intends to pursue. [The Government desired to save Russia in future from the danger of being led into war by the belief that England was not in earnest.] We have, therefore, in the most solemn manner possible, placed it on public record what

> the future policy of England is to be. . . . . Heretofore we have had only misty and shadowy guarantees which might mean anything or nothing—guarantees that were hardly honourable to European policy. We have had on record a treaty by which Austria, France, and England promised to make it a *casus belli* if any provision of the Treaty of Paris were broken. But in the case of that collective guarantee, when the time came for putting it in force it was not enforced. . . . . We have therefore thought it better to adopt a simpler form of engagement, about whose fulfilment there can be no doubt.—*H. of L.* July 29th.

> Guarantees of this sort cannot possibly bind future generations. The policy of every generation must be decided by itself and upon a consideration of the circumstances existing at the time and a consideration of what is most expedient.—*Lord Hartington, H. of C.* July 29th.

Thus criticism and apology for the Berlin settlement took a somewhat odd form. Looking at the net result as the balance of an account, both parties to the controversy were inclined to think that the balance was on the right side. But that which one party regarded as profit the other regarded as loss.

The quarrel of the Opposition was not so much with the result as a whole as with the English Government for marring this result and for importing into it elements of mischief.

(*c.*) *Ambiguity of the Solution.*—Not only however was the settlement two-sided, consisting as it did of the acquiescence of the English Government in a great measure of Emancipation, coupled with their stipulations for restricting the completeness of this Emancipation and for upholding Turkey for the future, but this latter branch of the settlement was itself exceedingly ambiguous.

To begin with, our position in Cyprus, which was to be occupied and administered by us while still professing allegiance to the Sultan, was an exceedingly anomalous one.[1]

But there were other matters, no less obscure, and of greater importance. The instruments[2] spoke of new laws to be promulgated after consultation with the European Commission, for the parts of European Turkey which had not been given their practical independence, of "improvements and reforms" for the Armenians

[1] Questions were asked in both Houses on July 11th as to what the position of affairs would be with regard to slavery. The answers left the matter somewhat vague.

On July 26th (*H. of C.*) Sir William Harcourt asked questions as to the status of the inhabitants which Sir John Holker characterised as highly speculative.

[2] Treaty of Berlin, Arts. 23 and 61 (*ante*, pp. 472, 473) and Anglo-Turkish Convention (*ante*, p. 476).

to be communicated to the Powers who would superintend their application, and of "necessary reforms" for the territories of the Sultan in Asia to be agreed on between England and Turkey. What was the significance of these provisions? Was it, as the universality of the stipulations seemed to indicate, one more attempt to induce the Turkish Government to Europeanise its methods, while leaving it in uncontrolled authority? Or did the references to a "European Commission," and "the Powers," point to the intervention of some authority between the Sultan and his subjects which to that extent would amount to an emancipation from the Turkish yoke? Or finally, was England about to take upon herself the administration of the whole of the Asiatic provinces of Turkey? [1]

> We believe the opponents of these recent transactions have been accused of inconsistency because they approved of the principle of reform for Turkish provinces recommended by Mr. Gladstone, and yet cannot admire the Asiatic protectorate devised by Lord Beaconsfield. To begin with, there may be the gravest reasons for objecting to any one Power taking on it certain responsibilities which would be open to no objection if undertaken by the combined authority of all the Great Powers of Europe. But entirely apart from this consideration, what can be more different than the principles on which Mr. Gladstone would have based his scheme of reform, and those which Lord Beaconsfield has adopted? . . . It was understood that the basis of tranquillity in the south-east of Europe must be found in the development of young, vigorous, and struggling nationalities. . . . The agreement between England and Turkey merely proposes that England shall enable the Ottoman Empire in Asia to go on regulating its affairs through all the old mechanism of Pashas and of despotism. . . . It means either this or the actual acquisition of Asiatic Turkey by England.—*D. N.* July 13th.

> We thought the time had come when we should take steps which would produce some order out of the anarchy and chaos that had so long prevailed. . . . I hold that we have laid the foundation of a state of affairs which may open a new continent to the civilisation of Europe.—*Lord Beaconsfield*, July 27th.[2]

> If the Premier's rhetorical expressions have any substantial meaning in them this must signify that we are virtually taking on ourselves the whole internal government of Asiatic Turkey.—*D. N.* July 29th.

> I have wandered myself for many winters across the plains of the Nile, and many a spring-time over the plains of Syria, by its ancient rivers, tracing the course of the Tigris and Euphrates—I

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 177, as to the ambiguities arising out of the word "Reform."
[2] Knightsbridge banquet.

have wandered across the Armenian hills, and one cry from all these people has always met my ear—"When are you coming?" Yes, when are you coming? Are you surprised that they should wish for the advent of England? We are going in a different guise to the conquerors of former times. We go not to dispossess the legitimate Sovereign, but to strengthen his hands, and we invite civilised Europe to join us in that high enterprise. We hope to bring to these lands the blessings which our civilisation and our long peace have brought us; we hope to give them the blessings of commerce, railroads, the steam plough, manufactures, and all the arts and employments of peace.—*Lord Sandon, H. of C.* July 30th.

Sir Stafford Northcote explicitly assured the House on Friday night that it should not be a hollow and dishonest Convention, but that the efforts of Great Britain would be directed to procuring for Asiatic Turkey visible improvements in its revenue system, its judicial system, and its police system. [In the City the Prime Minister amplified this important text, and Lord Salisbury was, if possible, yet more distinct and categorical in his assurances.] Language such as this cannot be too highly commended. It destroys the last objections which the Opposition had to offer to the policy of the Government; for, while it holds out the hope of better days for the subjects—Christian and Mahometan alike—of the Sultan, it confronts Russia with a real "civilising mission," in antagonism to her own spurious and disintegrating one, and it guarantees to foreign countries that the conquests of England will redound even more to their advantage than to her own.—*St.* Aug. 5th.

Again, what was to be said of the engagement binding England to fight to defend Turkey's Asiatic frontier against further Russian aggression? Was the engagement conditional on Turkey's introducing into Armenia reforms, approved and perhaps supervised by England, or was it independent of any such condition?

Thus the question of the intention of the Government with respect to the engagement was bound up with the question of their intentions with respect to the reform of Asiatic Turkey, and on neither point could clear consistent indications be obtained.

We have asked many questions in the vain hope of obtaining information which may enlighten us as to the proceedings of the Government, and the nature of these transactions.—*Lord Granville, H. of L.* July 29th.

It is impossible not to be struck with the fact that the Government or their supporters speak with two voices of the Convention of the fourth of June. They seek at once to minimise the burdens and liabilities which it must involve, and to exaggerate its value and consequence. This contrast was observable a week

ago when Lord Beaconsfield interpreted the Convention to mean a formal notice to Russia, "Thus far and no farther;" and when Lord Cranbrook, echoing the language of Lord Salisbury, asserted that the assistance which we had promised to lend to Turkey was somehow conditional on her governing well. . . If we are to believe some expositors of the policy of the Government, England will never be liable to be troubled with the duties attached to her new alliance unless the Porte becomes a model ruler, [but] the protectorate cannot be withdrawn, whatever be the behaviour of the Porte, without an abandonment of interests which the Ministers tell us that it would be treason to betray.—*D. N.* July 26th.

What is this scheme? England defends the Turkish frontier against Russia, and to justify this she covenants for the good government of Turkey in Asia, in order to insure which she takes possession of Cyprus. [The future philosophic historian will give a different version of the matter. It will run something like this] "England"—that is the English Ministry—"wanted the possession of Cyprus. In order to induce the Turkish Sultan to give them Cyprus they undertook to defend this frontier against Russia, and in order to make the defence of that frontier decent in a philanthropic point of view they then obtained the stipulations for the good government of Asia.—*Mr. Gladstone, H. of C.* July 30th.

[It seemed unsatisfactory that neither of the Plenipotentiaries were able to take part in the debate in the House of Commons, as it would have been desirable to hear from their lips] what they understood to be the nature of the engagement which has been taken by the English Government, and which was interpreted so differently by Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Sandon, Lord John Manners, and Mr. Bourke. We all therefore turn with eager interest to the speeches of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary at the Mansion House in the hope of discovering whether our engagement is philanthropic or selfish; whether it is conditional or positive; whether it means general supervision or actual administration of the affairs of Asiatic Turkey; whether it has any limits as to time, or is supposed to stretch our responsibility to the crack of doom. Let us say at once that so far as we understand the speech of the Prime Minister, it confirms the most expanded or the most extravagant views of those who were especially captivated by the supposed vastness of the new enterprise. We are, according to Lord Beaconsfield, to undertake the entire reorganisation of Asiatic Turkey, and it is evident that this must be by the instrumentality chiefly of Turkish systems and officials.—*D. N.* Aug. 5th.

In view of the complexity of the solution and the cloud under which the real significance of the Convention with Turkey was hidden, it might well be asked what it was in the solution which Public Opinion found to approve, if indeed the Government now had that approval of Public Opinion which it claimed.

Was it the emancipation of Bulgaria or the restriction of the emancipation to the narrowest possible limit? Was it the pledge to defend the new frontier of Turkey in Asia, or was it a condition which rendered the pledge illusory?

Did people approve in the belief that the provisions as to reform might be treated as mere pious opinions, or did they think that these provisions pointed to nothing less than a protectorate of Asia Minor by England?

If Public Opinion had really ratified the Ministerial policy, what was the policy which it had ratified? Could such an approval signify anything else than a willingness on the part of Public Opinion to ratify its own abdication?

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PRESIDENTIAL PERIOD.

§ 1. *Developments of the Ministerial Policy.*

THE period which elapsed between the return of the Earl of Beaconsfield and the Marquis of Salisbury from Berlin, in July, 1878, until the General Election in March, 1880, might, from one point of view, be considered as a prolongation of the Dictatorship, from another, as one long electoral campaign. But that which seems to constitute its essentially characteristic feature, is what may be called its *Presidential* character. That is to say, during this period the notion that the Executive can be replaced whenever it gets out of harmony with the preponderating Public Opinion of the country fell into abeyance, and for the time, our constitution approximated to one in which the Executive is appointed for a *fixed term*, thus losing just the characteristic which the theoretic perfection of the English system of Cabinet government should secure. Public Opinion had come to believe that however contrary the policy of the Government might be to the real opinion of the country, there existed no means of effectually opposing it, so long as the existing Parliament should endure; and moreover, that this was likely to be protracted to its utmost limit, unless perhaps the Government should earlier chance upon some auspicious moment in which to put their fortunes to the touch.

Adverse criticism of the Government was not silenced; on the contrary, it was loud and incessant. Public Opinion had become suspicious and sensitive. It saw everywhere fresh signs of the tendency summed up in the one word "Imperialism." From this point of view there was abundant material for criticism in the policy of the Government subsequent to the return from Berlin.

But hardly any one seems to have expected that any criticism which could be brought to bear would operate in the least degree as an effective check upon the Government. With reference to the conduct of the matters immediately in hand, the discussions were almost academical; but with reference to the General Election they were highly polemical.

As a matter of practical politics, the Government had influence to exert after the signature of the Treaty of Berlin which might be exerted either in the direction of the "red" or the "violet" policy. As we have seen, it by no means resulted from the fact that a treaty had been signed, that events should follow the course prescribed for them. Towards the end of 1879 it seemed that the Government were entertaining the question of coercing Turkey into fulfilling her obligations. But this had reference rather to the introduction of "reforms" into Asia Minor, than to any measure of emancipation. On the other hand, no sooner was the Treaty of Berlin signed than Russia, it was hinted, was intriguing to find pretexts for delaying the evacuation of Turkish territory and to bring about a union of Roumelia with Bulgaria. Much was said about enforcing the execution of the Treaty of Berlin during the latter part of 1878 and the beginning of the next year, and it seemed as if a war with Russia on this ground was by no means impossible.

> Neither by charging Russia with inciting the Bulgarians near Constantinople to pretend that they are afraid of massacre, nor by charging her with inciting the Bulgarians in Macedonia to revolt, will the settlement of the East and the peace of Europe be secured. . . . The Eastern Question cannot be solved until the directing principle of English policy is a conviction that the secret of the unsettlement of the East does not lie in Russian intrigue, but in Ottoman misgovernment. To go to war to perpetuate this misgovernment would be an act of unexampled folly. The danger was narrowly escaped two years ago. The English people will take care that they are not involved in that folly and wickedness now.—*D. N.* Nov. 4th, 1878.

> [The objection to the policy of the Government is that] they have played the game of Russia and secured to her a success beyond her wildest hopes from the time that she commenced the war. We have always contended that if the Government chose to back the independence and integrity of Turkey against Russia they would lose, and they have lost. . . . Owing to this fatal blundering Russia has secured her influence over Servia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro, and if you still persist in the same policy she will yet acquire dominion over Albania, Macedonia, and Roumelia. Our course

would have been a different one. We should have taken out of the hand of Russia the weapon by which she has triumphed. . . . The remaining books of the Sibyl are still offered to us, but so surely as we follow the same course, so surely shall we ultimately secure to Russia the supreme influence in what remains of European Turkey. The Ottoman Empire is doomed, and the residuary legatee of its fortunes will be the Power which commands the sympathy of those populations which will go forth from the ruins of the European Bastille.—*Sir W. Harcourt*, Jan. 14th, 1879.

The fate of the Eastern Roumelians lies in their own hands. If they accept loyally and fairly the Treaty of Berlin, and take advantage of the full administrative autonomy which is granted to them, they will enjoy a freedom which other nations on this continent may well envy. If, to follow a fancy or satisfy a formula, they refuse those Liberal institutions, repression must follow, and their blood be upon their head.—*Lord Salisbury*, April 30th, 1879.[1]

While the Liberal party looked to the independence of the nationalities of the Balkan peninsula as the best means of counteracting designs of aggrandisement on the part of Russia, the Government seemed not to be averse to a further development of the policy which had assigned Bosnia and the Herzegovine to Austria. Such at least was the significance attached to Lord Salisbury's words when he spoke of the news of an alliance between Germany and Austria as "glad tidings of great joy," and went on to speak of the contrast between the then state of affairs, and what it had been on the morning of the Treaty of San Stefano, as the vindication of his stewardship.[2]

In protest against such designs as those attributed to Austria Mr. Gladstone insisted on the attitude towards the Provinces of Turkey, expressed in the phrase "Hands off."[3]

But apart from the conduct of the Turkish question by the Government (still eagerly discussed), further matters transpired on which criticism might fasten. The hope expressed by Lord Salisbury that we were about to enter upon a time when our attention would no longer be distracted by foreign disturbances,[4] was not destined to be fulfilled. Hardly had it been uttered when

[1] At the Middlesex Conservative banquet.

[2] At the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, Oct. 17th, 1879.

[3] See Mr. Gladstone's strictures on Austria, Nov. 29th, 1879, and March 17th, 1880 (*Midlothian*, first series, p. 82, and second series, p. 14).

After Mr. Gladstone's accession to office these utterances occasioned some diplomatic correspondence. See Mr. Gladstone's letter to Count Karolyi, published in the London newspapers of May 11th, 1880. The true significance of Mr. Gladstone's "apology," as it was called, appears to lie in the taking note of the disclaimer of aggressive designs which had been elicited from Austria.

[4] At the Mansion House, Aug. 3rd, 1878, *ante*, p. 480.

intimations appeared of impending trouble on the Indian frontier. As the Home Secretary announced to an audience which he was addressing at Southport,

> There has arisen a shadow on the hills.—*Mr. Cross*, Oct. 17th, 1878.

The anti-Russian feeling would, it seemed, after all bring about a collision in Asia, not indeed between England and Russia herself, but between England and Afghanistan. Afghanistan was regarded as a nidus for Russian intrigues, or a vantage ground which Russia might occupy were we not beforehand with her, and the war seemed to serve as a vent for the pent-up hostility which still burnt in many breasts against Russia,[1] notwithstanding the settlement which had been effected.

The resignation of Lord Northbrook and his succession by Lord Lytton as Viceroy of India early in 1876, seem to be connected with a determination on the part of the English Government to enter upon a course of policy directed towards the establishment of English influence in Afghanistan.[2]

The reception of a Russian mission at Cabul in the summer of 1878, was followed by a peremptory demand for the reception of a special English mission, and on the Ameer's refusal war was commenced. The first reports sent home represented the refusal of the Afghan officer in command of the frontier fort of Ali Musjid to allow the English mission to pass, as given with circumstances of studied insult, a colour which subsequent accounts did not bear out.[3] The promulgation of such reports appears like an attempt to work upon Public Opinion at home.

On Lord Mayor's Day the Premier spoke of the north-western frontier of India as a "haphazard, and not a scientific frontier."[4] There are some indications that the real object with which the war was undertaken was to annex as much of Afghan territory as would give us the command of the passes on the north-western frontier of India.

[1] Mr. Chamberlain mentioned that Captain Burnaby, the Tory candidate for Birmingham at the next election, at a ward meeting "startled the more reasonable of his supporters by uttering the astounding prayer, 'Would to God we were at war with Russia!'"—*Letter in T.* Nov. 5th, 1878.

[2] *Ante*, p. 215. See *Causes of the Afghan War* (being an abstract of the Parliamentary Papers, with narrative and comments, prepared by a Sub-Committee of the Afghan Committee). London, Chatto and Windus, 1879. See also Argyll, vol. ii.

[3] See *D. N.* Oct. 16th and 18th, 1878, and compare Mr. Gladstone, April 2nd, 1880 (*Midlothian*, second series, pp. 84, 85).

[4] Guildhall banquet, Nov. 9th, 1878.

The doctrine of "British Interests" as the criterion of international conduct was now in the ascendant. A strong tendency showed itself to disparage the authority of any maxims which should stand in the way of such designs.[1]

> It is rather late in the day to appeal to Grotius, after we have annexed nearly the whole of India in defiance of his artificial precepts.—*T.* Oct. 28th, 1878.

On the reassembling of Parliament in February, 1879, the Premier said:—

> We have secured the object for which the expedition was undertaken. We have secured that frontier which will, I hope, render our Indian Empire invulnerable.—*H. of L.* Feb. 13th, 1879.

Whatever the views with which the war had been entered upon, the policy of treating India as so securely inclosed within an impregnable rampart that we could afford to be indifferent to anything that went on beyond the frontier, did not prevail. The Afghan forces were unable to withstand the invading columns. Shere Ali fled for refuge towards Russian Turkestan, leaving his son, Yakoob Khan, at Cabul. Shortly afterwards the death of Shere Ali was announced, and the British Government recognised Yakoob Khan as Ameer, and concluded with him the Treaty of Gandamak,[2] whereby the "scientific frontier" was, it is true, ceded, but in addition to this the new Ameer agreed to receive a British Representative at Cabul and to conduct his relations with other

[1] An important correspondence on International Law as bearing on our relations with Afghanistan, towards which Lord Grey, Lord Lawrence, and Sir William Harcourt furnished contributions, was commenced by some letters which Sir James Stephen addressed to the *Times*.

He contended that we must recognise the fact that Asia must fall to the lot of England, Russia, and China, and act accordingly. Whether or not it is best to advance our frontier by annexation is a question for military experts.—(*T.* Oct. 16th, 1878.)

(And again) that International Law has no application to India, whatever the value of the system might be to Europe; (and he thought it much over-rated and misunderstood, and calculated to embitter international relations rather than to avoid war.)—(*T.* Oct. 28th.)

Lord Lawrence wrote that the essence of Sir J. Stephen's argument seemed to be that the real principle on which we should act in India is that of our own interests. "But I join issue with him on this point."—(*D. N.* Oct. 31st.)

Lord Northbrook said Sir J. Stephen had confounded the conventional law of nations with those fundamental principles of the law of nations which are founded on the first principles of morals. He protested against the doctrine that in our dealing with native states we were not to be bound by the latter.—(*Speech at Winchester*, Nov. 11th.)

Two further letters appeared from Sir J. Stephen, explaining that his position was not quite that which his critics had supposed, and affirming his own belief that our conduct in all parts of the world ought to be regulated by justice.—(*T.* Nov. 12th and 15th.)

[2] May 25th, 1879.

states in accordance with the advice of the British Government receiving from them a subsidy of £60,000 a year.

Meanwhile[1] voices at home, including some of great authority on Indian politics, were raised in deprecation of the course which the Government were taking. A letter from Lord Lawrence in the *Times* of Oct. 2nd foreboded trouble, unless the development of this policy should very speedily be checked by the people of England. Shortly afterwards the "Afghan Committee"[2] was formed, and a few meetings were held to protest against the Afghan War,[3] but these were mostly meetings arranged by special organisations, and there was nothing like any widespread or general agitation.

Lord Beaconsfield refused to receive a deputation from the Afghan Committee,[4] and it became evident, if indeed such had not been recognised from the beginning, that such efforts would have no influence on the immediate result, whatever might be their value as a protest and as influencing Public Opinion with a view to the future. It was much the same with the efforts of the parliamentary Opposition during the short session which commenced on Dec. 5th for the purpose of authorising the expenditure of the Indian revenues upon the war, as required by law.

Important debates and divisions took place in both Houses,[5] but the conclusion was a foregone one. Lord Derby expressed the general feeling when he said :—

> We are discussing, and we know we are discussing, an issue upon which we have no real or practical influence.—(*H. of L.* Dec. 9th, 1878.)

[1] *i.e.* autumn of 1878.
[2] Of which Lord Lawrence was chairman.
[3] *D. N.* Oct. 28th.
[4] *D. N.* Nov. 20th.
[5] *H. of L.* Dec. 10th.—On an amendment moved by Lord Halifax to the motion for charging the cost of the war on the revenues of India :—

For the Government	201
For the amendment	65—Majority, 136.

H. of C. Dec. 13th.—On resolution moved by Mr. Whitbread expressing disapproval of the conduct of the Government, which had resulted in the war :—

For the Government	328
For Mr. Whitbread's resolution	227—Majority, 101.

H. of C. Dec. 17th.—On an amendment moved by Mr. Fawcett to the motion for charging the cost of the war on the revenues of India :—

For the Government	235
For Mr. Fawcett's amendment	125—Majority, 110.

At the beginning of 1879 the Afghan war seemed practically over, but a new war broke out in South Africa. Threatened hostilities between the Transvaal Republic and the native tribes upon their borders had for some time been regarded as constituting a danger to the English colonies in South Africa, and in 1877 the English Government determined that the Transvaal Republic should be deprived of its independence, and accordingly, proclaimed that it had become subject to the English Crown. At the time, this annexation did not attract much attention in England. It seemed to be taken for granted that the Boers acquiesced in the loss of their independence.

Towards the end of 1878, Sir Bartle Frere, Governor and High Commissioner of the Cape Colony, addressed a peremptory demand to Cetewayo, king of the powerful Zulu tribe, requiring that the king should disband his army and abandon his Spartan system of government, with the compulsory celibacy on which its organisation rested, and that he should receive a British Resident. Lord Beaconsfield's Government subsequently expressed some disapproval of this step, but they refused to recall Sir Bartle Frere.[1]

Meanwhile, Cetewayo had returned no answer to Sir Bartle Frere's ultimatum, for such in effect it was, and on January 11th, 1879, the invasion of Zululand commenced. This news came somewhat unexpectedly upon people in England, and it was followed almost immediately by the news of a great disaster, namely, the destruction of a considerable British force at Isandhlwana, on January 22nd.

For a time fears were entertained for the safety of the colony of Natal, and of an English force which was beleaguered at Ekowe in the enemy's territory. However, these dangers were averted, and on July 4th the Zulu army was completely defeated in the battle of Ulundi, and Cetewayo himself was shortly afterwards taken prisoner. The resistance of the Zulus was broken down, and they accepted the terms offered, in accordance with which

[1] Lord Lansdowne moved a resolution condemning Sir Bartle Frere's policy, and expressing regret that the conduct of affairs in South Africa should be retained in his hands. This was defeated by 156 to 61.—*H. of L.* March 25th.

Sir C. Dilke moved a similar resolution (March 27th). This was debated for three nights. Sir William Harcourt referred to the story of the pencilled message after the battle of Navarino, and said the Government, while breathing censure in their despatches, really meant "Go it, Bartle!" Sir Charles Dilke's motion was defeated by 306 to 246.—*H. of C.* March 31st.

Zululand was divided into a number of separate governments under the control of a British Resident.[1]

The troubles in South Africa were not however over, for it was becoming evident that the Boers were not disposed willingly to accept their new position of subjects of the British Crown. However, Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had been sent out as the Queen's High Commissioner, announced to them that the annexation of the Transvaal was an irreversible act, and it was not until later that the troubles which ensued became acute.

But while these events were proceeding in South Africa, attention was suddenly recalled to Afghanistan by an event which only too speedily verified the predictions of those who had foreboded disaster. On September 3rd the British residency at Cabul was attacked and Sir Louis Cavagnari murdered by several regiments of the Ameer's army. This event was followed by another British invasion,[2] the fall of Yakoob Khan, and eventually by the establishment of Abdurrahman as Ameer at Cabul. This settlement however was not accomplished during Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry, nor without many battles and much anxiety.

Meanwhile the financial aspects of the development of Lord Beaconsfield's policy began to attract attention. On April 24th, 1879, Mr. Rylands brought forward a motion in the House of

[1] After the conclusion of the Zulu War there was some further fighting with the native tribes. The chief Secocoeni was captured, and the chief Moirosi was killed, towards the end of 1879.

According to correspondents of the *Daily News* these operations were accompanied by some incidents of a very shocking character.

The *Daily News*, Jan. 26th, 1880, published an extract from a letter of Bishop Colenso's, in which the Bishop observed that not a word had been said about the killing of Secocoeni's women and children by dynamite. He continued:—"I think that this use of dynamite to blow up caves in which women and children are known to be hiding—at the Intombu cave, for instance, if not Secocoeni's—is positively diabolical."

The *Daily News*, Jan. 27th, 1880, published a letter from a correspondent at Cape Town, who spoke of atrocities committed by our auxiliaries, the Amaswazi, in the Secocoeni expedition. "These things will possibly never come to light. Had they been done under any other flag they would have called down a world of just indignation. . . . It is a deep stain on our national honour [to have employed such auxiliaries.]"

[2] A painful impression was produced by reports of numerous military executions at Cabul. (See *Fort. Rev.* Dec. 1879, "Martial Law in Cabul," F. Harrison.) It was feared that men were being executed on technical charges of rebellion or mutiny. (See Memorial to the Prime Minister, *D. N.* Feb. 2nd, 1880.) On the opening of Parliament (Feb. 5th, 1880) the subject was alluded to by the Duke of Argyll and Lord Hartington in their respective Houses. Ministers asked that judgment might be suspended. A long communication from General Roberts, who wrote, "As for men being hanged for the simple fact of their having fought against us, such was not the case," was read in both Houses of Parliament on Feb. 14th. General Roberts's explanation was received in the House of Lords with loud cheers from both sides. (*Times* report.)

Commons censuring the Government for the great increase in the national expenditure. In the debate which ensued the increased expenditure was treated as the outcome of the Ministerial policy, and the Government were attacked, not so much for the expenditure itself, as for the enterprises which had occasioned it.[1]

The derangement of the finances of India, too, occasioned serious misgivings.

> It was after the disappearance of Lord Northbrook that the new policy of which you have had a nearer knowledge in Europe, began to develop itself in India; and with the commencement of that new policy . . . . there began the reign of deficiency.—*Mr. Gladstone*, Nov. 29th.[2]

Moreover, it was shrewdly suspected that the Indian Government were underestimating the cost of the Afghan war, which had already absorbed the greater part of the fund intended as an insurance against famine.[3]

The expenditure which the Government were incurring was not the only feature of their finance which was complained of. By the facility with which they resorted to supplementary estimates, and to the expedient of temporary borrowing, they not only violated the canons of sound finance, but they placed the House of Commons as a controlling body at a disadvantage, and they disguised the expenditure from those who might have resented it, had it been immediately felt in the form of increased taxation.

> In the five years of this Government eight millions and a quarter of money were spent—almost entirely, I think, in the last of those years—more than the Chancellor of the Exchequer had asked for in his April budget. . . . There is no accuracy in the account, and a system is adopted under which accuracy is impossible, and under which control is no more than a perfect phantom. . . . [That which Sir Robert Peel in 1842 denounced as "the miserable expedient" of tolerating deficit, and of making provision by loans from year to year] has become the standing law, has almost become the financial gospel of the Government that is now in power.—*Mr. Gladstone*, Nov. 29th.[4]

[1] See *Times*, May 1st, *post*, p. 514. The debate was resumed on April 28th, when a division was taken, and Mr. Rylands' motion was defeated by 303 to 230.

[2] *Midlothian*, first series, p. 73.

[3] See Mr. Gladstone Nov. 29th and Dec. 5th, 1879. (*Midlothian*, first series, pp. 79 and 100.) Compare *Spec.* Feb. 14th, 1880. It afterwards appeared that the expenditure had been enormously underestimated. (See Lord Hartington's Indian financial statement, *H. of C.* Aug. 17, 1880.)

[4] *Midlothian*, first series. pp 77, 78. Mr. Gladstone devoted this speech, which was delivered in the Corn Exchange, Edinburgh, mainly to finance.

Thus the financial question became implicated with the whole question of the general policy of the Government.[1]

§ 2. *The Electoral Campaign.*

The interval which elapsed between the return of the two Ministers from Berlin and the General Election was occupied by controversies which kept the political interest of the country excited to a degree short only of that which had obtained while peace and war had been trembling in the balance. In effect it was an electoral campaign waged in countless speeches and in countless articles upon the platform and in the press.[2]

No sooner was the Berlin settlement completed than the storm of criticism broke out both upon the matter and the manner of the proceedings of the Government. On the other hand, the Ministerialists contended that the right thing had been done, and also that the Government were in full accord with the opinion of the country.

> This is an occasion on which it is difficult to remember anything else than that Lord Beaconsfield and his Cabinet have conducted the country through a most arduous course of affairs to a position which gives substantial satisfaction to all but extreme partisans. It ought to be remembered, moreover, that this result, like many of Lord Beaconsfield's achievements, has been gained in spite of both friends and foes and by the most unexpected means. . . . He declined to incur the risk of coercing Turkey by force of arms; but he equally abstained from yielding to the reviving clamour of the extreme party on the other side, who would hear of nothing but the repression of Russia. [With the Russian advance to the shores of the Sea of Marmora and the conclusion of the Treaty of San Stefano] it became evident that,

[1] The following debates of the Session 1879, in addition to those noted above, bear on the general policy of the Government.

H. of C. April 17th.—Debate on the attitude of the Government towards Greece, brought on by Mr. Cartwright, who moved a resolution to the effect that tranquillity in the East demanded that satisfaction should be given to the claims of Greece, as recognised by the Berlin protocols. The resolution was defeated by sixty-three to forty-seven.

H. of L. May 5th.—Debate raised by Lord Granville, who inquired as to the unfulfilled provisions of the Treaty of Berlin.

H. of C. May 13th.—Debate on the exercise of the Royal Prerogative, brought on by Mr. Dillwyn.

H. of L. May 16th.—Debate on the general foreign policy of the Government, brought on by the Duke of of Argyll (*post*, p. 509 and p. 525.)

H. of C. July 22nd.—Debate on attitude of the Government towards the claims of Greece brought on by Sir Charles Dilke.

[2] Including a number of important articles in various magazines, particularly the *Nineteenth Century*. Among these articles, "England's Mission," by Mr. Gladstone (*19th Cent.* Sept. 1878), was one of the most important.

unless Eastern affairs were to be settled without our voice and in disregard of our interests, we must show that we were both determined and able to assert our claims. It is probably to the resource which Lord Beaconsfield displayed at that juncture that the present peace is mainly due. . . . The great stroke of his policy was the summoning of the contingent of native troops from India. . . . There can be no question whatever of its extraordinary success. It suddenly revealed, alike to England itself and to Europe, a source of power in the English Empire which had never yet been taken into account. The proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India was translated from a mere ceremony into a potent reality, and the best statesmen both in Russia and in the other countries of Europe recognised that it would be folly to disregard the claims and wishes of England in Eastern affairs. . . . It was thus the merit of Lord Beaconsfield and his Ministry to keep in view throughout these discussions the two convictions and currents of opinion by which the country was swayed, and to do justice to each of them at the proper time. . . . It was no doubt possible for this country, by means of the power which it has been proved to possess, to force back Russia from the vantage ground she had won. But it was reserved for Lord Beaconsfield to discover a means for accomplishing this end which at once avoided a war and gave a guarantee alike to Europe and to this country of the maintenance of all their legitimate interest.—*T.* July 16th.

[It is argued] that the acquiescence of Parliament proves that the royal prerogative cannot have been strained. The acquiescence of Parliament would certainly show that for the present at least the Ministry who had introduced the innovation were secure against any rebuke. . . . The Prime Minister could hardly do anything of which when it had once been done the present majority in the House of Commons would not approve. We are not aware indeed, that any one ever before argued that the Constitutional principles of a system like ours could be subverted in a moment by a mere vote of condonation on the part of a subservient majority in the House of Commons.—*D. N.* Aug. 3rd.

The meaning of the late division [1] in the House of Commons can scarcely be mistaken by either party. To the Government it is a full acceptance by the country of what has been done by them in the country's name; an indemnity if such were needed for all alleged infringements upon the rights and privileges of Parliament; an announcement in the most plain terms that it is with them and not with their opponents, that the great body of the Legislature has made up its mind to side definitely. Nor is the lesson which it conveys to the Liberals less clear and precise. It teaches them, or ought to teach them, the grave and dangerous error of the course to which they have lately been committing themselves. They have been for some time past indulging themselves with mere fault-finding. They have been asking questions of a kind the best

[1] *Ante*, p. 483.

> calculated to embarrass those who had the conduct of affairs. They have been putting forward bitter and almost insulting criticisms with a necessarily imperfect knowledge of the cases to which they were applied, and with no great regard to the effect they were likely to produce. Their language in the late debate was, on the whole, of a piece with what had been heard from them before. The division list is the answer to it all, and the judgment pronounced by Parliament upon its authors. . . . We may well question whether from first to last any effect has been produced by the comments and criticisms of the Liberals. . . . It ought to be clear on all sides that the time has now arrived when this process of picking holes should be brought to an end. . . . There will remain plenty of work for the eminent men which the Liberal party contains. . . . It is in domestic legislation that they will find their most appropriate sphere.—*T.* Aug. 5th.

> We cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that it was not Lord Hartington's resolution alone that was rejected and condemned on Saturday morning. The autumnal agitation of 1876, the Crusade of Horrors, the inflammatory pamphlets, the denunciatory speeches, the embarrassing questions, all the thousand and one errors which it would be so easy to recall, but which we would far rather forget, were condemned by the vote which closed the week's debate. The City of London must be considered to have ratified that verdict by its action a few hours later. . . . Does it not occur to Mr. Gladstone that he must have indulged in some exaggeration, in rather too much angry retrospect and fearful foreboding? Is the whole world not only wrong, but flagrantly and immorally wrong? Are we all, or nearly all, taking true for false and false for true? Is Parliament the dupe of mere audacity? Is the City of London deprived of its judgment and common sense by the wiles of Mephistopheles?—*St.* Aug. 5th.

While the Ministerialists thus claimed that a conclusive verdict had already been pronounced in their favour, the other party to the controversy were looking forward to the dissolution as to an appeal to a final court, and were already beginning to point out the issues which that appeal would raise.

> I must say, that if I can form a judgment, there never has been a period when the differences between [the two] parties were more broadly pronounced, more clearly declared. If a man cannot see them now, he is blind indeed. [The Tories] tell you that the honour, the interest, the pride, the prestige—as they call it—and all the rest of it, of the country are now at length rescued from the degradation to which they were submitted in Liberal hands, and that we have attained a position so high that we are the admiration of all the world. I agree that there is a wide—ay, at present almost an immeasurable—gulf between these parties, only I take the liberty of stating the matter that is in difference

in rather a different form and shape. The idea that there was little difference between the parties was long fostered by the action of three Tory Governments, which were in a minority, and lived on Liberal charity. But we did not then know what a Tory Government was when supported, as it is now supported, by a considerable, and by a perfectly inflexible and an impenetrable majority. It can never be said we are not justified in judging them by the acts of the last five years. I really think the time has come when it would be well if the people of this country could have the power of pronouncing upon those acts. . . . What has been done during and under this Administration, and most of all what has been done during the last twelve months, during the last six months, during the last three months, during the month of June, raises a question broader than any of the questions that have divided Tories from Liberals during the last half century, for it is whether you are substantially to be governed, your future pledged and compromised, your engagements enormously extended, the necessity for your taxes enlarged and widened, not only without your assent, but without your knowledge, and not only without your knowledge, but with the utmost care to conceal from you the facts. . . . It is quite time that the people of this country should on the earliest convenient opportunity, be consulted as to the mode in which they are being governed, and that, if these things are to be done, they shall be done, not in the dark and behind your backs, but in your faces and with your knowledge —perhaps against your will and my will, but with the will and the full concurrence of the majority of the people entitled to give their votes upon them.—*Mr. Gladstone*, July 20th, 1878.[1]

Meanwhile Ministers and their apologists asserted that their policy had been a great practical success, a prominent feature of which was the rescue of Constantinople which they claimed to have achieved.[2]

No doubt we could have prevented Russia taking Batoum as we prevented Russia taking Constantinople.—*Lord Beaconsfield, H. of L.* May 16th, 1879.

For the rest, had not Mr. Gladstone sacrificed many thousands of lives, and spent many millions of money in the Crimean War, and then allowed Russia to tear up the treaty, and had not Lord Beaconsfield, at a cost of a few millions, and without war in Europe, checked Russia, and made South Africa and India safe?[3]

While Liberals in England were mortified by the spectacle

[1] At Southwark, *ante*, p. 482.

[2] *Ante*, p. 346, and compare Mr. Gladstone, March 17th, 1880 (*Midlothian*, second series, p. 12).

[3] This notion was encountered during the canvass for Sir Arthur Hobhouse and Mr. John Morley, the Liberal candidates for Westminster, in March or April, 1880.

presented by M. Tisza in the Hungarian Diet, when he justified the keeping of the legislature uninformed of the intention to occupy Bosnia by the example of *England*,[1] the expression of their constitutional misgivings at home was visited with the utmost scorn.

To talk of personal government or of the degradation of Parliament was to attempt to alarm by worn-out bugbears;[2] while the annual Mutiny Act itself was spoken of as "doomed,"[3] and its history was touched on in a strain which seemed laboured to cast discredit on an effeté precaution.

Above all, the Liberals were taunted with a "distaste for national greatness,"[4] and a desire to break up the Empire, and diminish the influence and power of England.

> But the election which is impending, deeply as it will affect certain interesting questions of home politics, is more important still in respect of foreign politics. It is [our opponents'] doing that it is so. They have so framed the issue that if a Liberal Ministry returns to power every state in Europe will understand that in Lord Hartington's language the policy of the present Government is to be undone. Every state in Europe will understand that England retires from the position which she occupies, and accepts the abdication of power to which she submitted in 1871 and 1873. [We may judge of how our opponents] would have dealt with the Eastern Question by the way in which they dealt with the sudden claim of Russia to abrogate the Black Sea clauses in 1871. We may conclude that they would have allowed Russia to occupy Constantinople, that they would then have exacted from her an abstract statement that it is very wrong for a Power to occupy a town without being allowed to do so by the other Powers, and then they would have confirmed her in the possession of what she had gained. . . . With respect to Afghanistan what policy do they propose? Lord Hartington tells us that we must retire behind our frontier which I have described to you. . . . I feel sure that the electors of this country will not be blind to the gravity of the issue which events have placed before them. If they neglect the teaching of the past they may have more exasperating legislation separating class from class, and encouraging new enterprises against property and order. They may have more abdication of the proper position of England, and more trusting to Isolation

[1] *D. N.* Nov. 18th, 1878.

[2] See *Times*, Nov. 29th, 1878, commenting on a speech of Mr. Childers at Pontefract, Nov. 27th.

[3] See *Times*, Feb. 14th, 1879. In this session the Government brought in a Bill to supersede the preamble of the annual Mutiny Acts, which became law as the Army Discipline and Regulation Act, 1879. Sir Stafford Northcote explained (Feb. 13th) that the idea of withdrawing the army from the annual control of Parliament had never been entertained. The above act now requires annual acts to bring it into force year by year.

[4] *P. M. G.* quoted by Mr. Gladstone in *19th Cent.* Sept. 1878.

and to the friendship or to the good will of the Powers before whom they kneel. All over the world we shall have masterly inactivity, except only if there should be some ancient institution to overthrow at home. I feel sure that the electors of this country will prefer to hold high the standard of English traditions and English honour, and that they will prefer to maintain a firm front at home, in order that, with the co-operation of worthy allies, we may be able to maintain peace and right abroad.—*Lord Salisbury*, Oct. 17th, 1879.[1]

If there be a country, for example, with the most extensive and the wealthiest empire in the world, and if that country with a perverse interpretation of its insular geographical character turns an indifferent ear to the feelings and fortunes of Continental Europe, I believe peace is in danger. . . . I speak thus frankly to my fellow-citizens in London, because I know that not only now, but in olden times, they were men who were never ashamed of the noblest sentiment of humanity, now decried by philosophers, the sentiment of patriotism. . . . I am convinced that they will never be bewildered by the sophistry that would teach them that to maintain their Empire they must forfeit their freedom. . . . I know I am speaking to men who are not ashamed of the Empire their ancestors created. When one of the greatest of the Romans was asked what his policy was, he replied, "Imperium et Libertas." That is a short programme, but it would not disgrace a British Ministry, and it is one on which the existing Ministry will always act.—*Lord Beaconsfield*, Nov. 10th.[2]

As events developed themselves in Afghanistan, and later on in South Africa, these proceedings were regarded as further manifestations of tendencies adverse to parliamentary institutions and favourable to the *rôle* of an aggressive military empire and of a tendency to exalt the doctrine of "British Interests" and to disregard the claims of morality and justice in our international dealings, to a degree not only dishonourable in itself but likely to recoil upon our own heads. It was the heaviest count of the indictment against the Government that their proceedings all through the conduct of the Eastern Question as well as of later events had been consistently marked by such tendencies as these. The chief anxiety of the Opposition was to press this conclusion home to the minds of the electors, and the staple of their oratory consisted in illustrations of this theme, drawn from the part which the English Government had played since foreign affairs came to the front.

[1] At Manchester. [2] At the Guildhall.

> The great question in dispute between the two parties, and the question out of which almost every other question has grown collaterally, has been what is known as the Eastern Question.—*Mr. Gladstone*, Nov. 25th.[1]

The Ministerialists complained of these reiterated references to the past, insisting that the controversy on foreign affairs was closed, and that public men should now turn their attention to domestic legislation.[2] At the same time they were careful to appeal to Conservative instincts, by dwelling on the differences between themselves, who desired to amend existing institutions, and their opponents who desired to make a "clean sweep."[3] But the Liberals did not respond to the challenge, and with a curious reversal of the *rôle* traditionally ascribed to them, refused to allow attention to be diverted from the larger questions involved in the questions of foreign policy.

> There is one thing which in my opinion is still more to be deplored than the Ministerial policy, and it is a thing which the Ministerial policy has engendered. We have seen a new spirit grow up among us which has deterioriated the staple fibre of the public mind—a spirit so strange to our ancient manners and our old traditions that it has been found necessary to invent for it a name for which the English language has no equivalent. It is called Jingoism. . .A liberal allowance of reserve may be tolerated for the necessary conduct of affairs, but that is not the thing of which we complain ; but what the Government have done is a very different matter. They have deliberately and of a system set to work to conceal from Parliament and the country what they were about till the nation was committed to acts and to policy which it was then too late to discuss and control. . . . Having watched this matter most anxiously, and with increasing alarm, I cannot doubt that this new system of government has its origin in minds which are deeply imbued with a dislike and contempt for Parliamentary control, and who desire nothing so much as to make the House of Commons the tool and not the masters of the Crown, and who therefore seize every occasion and every pretext to evade a defeat and weaken its authority. We live under the influence of the principles of Lord Bolingbroke and the practice of Lord Bute. I might give you many examples of this, which would show you that the thing has been done on a plan, and is not done as an occasional incident due to the pressure of extraordinary circumstances. . . . The danger is imminent lest the tradition of a free Parliament and

[1] *Midlothian*, first series, p. 39. In this, his first formal Midlothian address, Mr. Gladstone took up the story from the summer of 1875, the Consular Mission, and the Andrassy Note.

[2] *e.g. T.* Jan. 18th, and *T.* May 1st. See *post*, p. 514.

[3] Mr. Cross at Southport, Oct. 17th, 1878.

a self-governing people controlling a Constitution and an Administration should be abrogated, and we should see erected in its place a system of statecraft which creates the transaction of our affairs into a mystery of Ministerial intrigue. In the presence of such a danger, I intreat you to sink all minor differences and to unite in a common defence against a common foe. There is only one hope, but the remedy is in your own hands. If the majority of the nation is of one mind with the present majority of the House of Commons—if it is content that Parliament should be a passive machine to register foregone conclusions and to ratify and accomplish acts of the Ministers of the Crown, then, sir, no doubt the thing is done. The deep-laid scheme for revolutionising our constitutional system will be finally and permanently accomplished, and the basis of our future policy must be found in the maxim "*Populus vult decipi et decipiatur.*" But, sir, I cannot and I do not believe it. The omens are not favourable to the success of these sinister projects. . . . I devoutly hope and firmly believe that the voice of this nation will vindicate the principles of its ancient freedom, and will condemn by a decisive judgment a majority which has betrayed its trust, and a system which has lowered the standard of English public life, which has given to this people a peace which is no peace, and an honour which is unworthy of the name.—*Sir W. Harcourt at Oxford*, Jan. 14th.

I shall make no attack on the Government for their legislation. I don't think it is upon any record of legislation that this Parliament and this Government will be judged when the next appeal to the country comes. There is a larger and a wider issue which will be placed before you. The record upon which this Parliament and this Government will have to be judged, and upon which they will have to appeal to the constituencies, will be upon their foreign policy, upon the results of that policy on the security of our Indian Empire, and its effects upon our character as a nation . . . No, gentlemen, I say that in the next election, whatever may be the desire of the Government and their supporters, these are subjects upon which the Opposition have a right to speak, and have no wish to keep silence. Issues will have to be decided upon that occasion more momentous than any which have been brought before the country for many years. The country up to this time has never been consulted. This Parliament was elected upon far different considerations. It has, I admit, given an unfaltering and unhesitating support to the policy of the Government, but it remains to be seen whether in so doing it has had the confidence of the people. If, indeed, the verdict at the next election be that the country does approve and does endorse the policy of the last few years, then the case will be altered, but up to the present time I say that the country has never been consulted, and that upon such a vital and important question we, the Opposition, decline to treat those matters as past and done with. We shall not cease to bring them before the consideration

of the country. We shall try to bring phrases to the test of truth, and induce the people it may be to look these facts in the face, and to decide intelligently whether they wish to be governed by a foreign policy such as it has been during the last few years. . . . It is for this purpose, it is in order to bring these things before the minds of men who do not generally interest themselves in politics, that I and those with whom I have the honour to act have, as some of you may think, in season and out of season, tried to bring before you the facts of this Eastern Question, and to bring the magniloquent professions of the Government and their supporters to the test of truth.—*Lord Hartington*, Feb. 6th.[1]

To-day Parliament may be said to have reached the mid-point of the Session. . . . It is time to ask what has been done and what is likely to be done. To the former question the answer is simple enough. The energy of the House of Commons has been for the most part expended upon pitched battles of foreign policy. The Afghan War and the Zulu War have been debated at extraordinary length and with a superabundant infusion of party spirit. Within the past few days the Opposition have delivered an attack of a still more ambitious character.[2] The vote of censure upon the national expenditure under the present Ministry became in fact a general arraignment of the acts and motives of the Government since it entered office. [But the majority of the Government is not diminished.] Against this established predominance the Opposition can do little. There is all the more reason why now that they have said their say and spent their shafts, they should set about doing their share of the ordinary non-political work of legislation. . . . Partisan conflicts, wholesome as they often are, tend in more ways than one to check the current of legislative business.—*T.* May 1st.

Mr. Forster spoke of the change of policy required as a return to "sanity, and the ten commandments."—June 28th.[3]

But after all it is upon the foreign policy of the Government that they will have to be finally judged. Now, that is an old story, and if I have to go into it I am afraid I shall be very tedious and wearisome. It is worth while to understand it because it has cost you a great deal of money, and may cost you a great deal more.—*Sir W. Harcourt*, Oct. 2nd.[4]

I am sure you must have observed how the supporters of the Government shrink from the very name of foreign policy. They say now, "Let us talk of anything in the world but that." It was not so twelve months ago. Then it was the stock dish at their feasts; now their very gorge seems to rise at it.—*Sir W. Harcourt*, Oct. 6th.[5]

The whole policy of the Tory party has resolved itself into two things, one to have no appearance of harassing interests, and

[1] At Liverpool.
[2] Mr. Ryland's motion, *ante*, p. 504.
[3] At Bradford.
[4] At Southport.
[5] At Liverpool.

the other a policy of swaggering and bullying foreign countries. . . . . I have spoken to you of one, and I have a word to say on the other, and that is the swaggering policy which they have adopted. I approach that subject with some shame. I am not going to mince the matter at all, but I will state exactly what has been done, and will leave you to draw your own inferences. . . . I ask whether it is not better to have persons who "harass" people sometimes, than a Government whose conduct has been so flagrant that no honest people can think of them without shame and degradation. . . . I am old enough, I am sorry to say, to remember the time of the first Afghan war. . . . There is not a single error which was committed then which has not been committed now, and then we are told that we need not have expected a repetition of the events of 1840. We must, of course, make allowances. We are not all prophets, but to see people deliberately step after step rushing into every single act of what has occurred before, leaving people to destruction, is an evidence of fatuity that I could not have believed to have been possible. We are asked if we should get back into office what we should do. My answer is very simple. As far as legislation goes it has been a blank for the last six years. Where we put it down, where it has been left by our talented successors, there I would take it up. The interests we would have harassed I would harass still. The things we would have done, I would do still. . . . I believe there is no principle more true or more just than that a Government is not to see how it can longest stay in office, but how it can do the most good for the country. That is my view of the duty of a Government, and I can only say if there had been the slightest notion of this in the minds of the present Government, we should not have seen the horrible things we have, the carrying on of wars from mere blind, foolish ambition, and in order to divert the attention of the people at home from the misconduct of the Government, and for the sake of glittering and fanciful exhibition. —*Mr. Lowe*, Nov. 4th.[1]

Preparations are being made on both sides for the most important and momentous general election in our time. The question then to be decided at the polls is not merely whether one set of men or another is to govern the country, or even whether it is to be governed on the principle of Conservatism or on that of Reform, but whether we are to bring forward honest Budgets, pay our way, and not leave to our successors a legacy of undischarged debts; and more especially whether we are to abandon a foreign policy founded on jealousy and dislike of other nations, avowedly seeking pretexts and excuses for petty wars, and meant to cast a military glamour over the people, and to revert to our former more dignified, not to say more Christian-like, attitude of shunning unnecessary quarrels, and respecting the rights and liberties of others whilst ready and able to defend our own.—*Mr. Baxter*, Nov. 7th.[2]

[1] At Grantham. [2] At Bervie.

They had now to say whether they were satisfied with the present turbulent foreign policy which had harassed trade, which had disturbed industry, which had lost the lives of thousands of English soldiers, and he knew not how many tens of thousands of black men. He verily believed upon the issue of this election depended the question whether they had permanent good trade, steadily improving until they got back to the glorious times of Mr. Gladstone's Government; or whether they would go back again to the bad trade and to the hard times which they had experienced only a few months ago.—*Mr. Chamberlain*, Mar. 15th, 1880.[1]

The case for the Opposition is as complete as the brilliant and epigrammatic rhetoric of Sir William Harcourt and the subtle and philosophic omniscience of Mr. Grant Duff can make it. Words may hereafter be accumulated upon words, but the gravamen of the impeachment will remain unchanged: the assault may be renewed, but it is impossible that there should be any fresh variety of tactics. [Mr. Childers's speech to his constituents, reported to-day, confirms this view. Moreover we are acquainted] with the general nature of the policy that the Opposition would suggest as a substitute for that of Her Majesty's Government. Whatever admits of undoing is to be undone.[2] Cyprus is to be renounced; the Anglo-Turkish Convention is to be abandoned; after a war, which will have cost us many lives and much treasure has been waged in Afghanistan, the objects pronounced by Parliament a year ago to be imperatively necessary for which that war was undertaken are to be surrendered.—*St.* Oct. 17th, 1879.

There is among Conservative partisans at the present hour an almost hysterical eagerness to insist that those who oppose the Government oppose it only for its activity and energy. . . . The complaint is very different. We find fault with the present Government not for having intervened, but for having intervened invariably on the wrong side and at the wrong time. . . . They were called upon to support and to lift up Turkey's oppressed provinces, and they did all they could to help Turkey in her efforts to keep them in subjection for ever.—*D. N.* Oct. 21st, 1879.

The months of October and November were prolific in speeches, and the energy with which the controversy upon the platform was kept up reached its climax with Mr. Gladstone's visits to Midlothian.[3]

[1] At Birmingham.

[2] Mr. Gladstone spoke of the inheritance which the Government would leave—"financial confusion at home; financial confusion in India; treaties of the strangest and most entangled kind, to be dealt with subject to the honourable engagements under which they will have brought the country."—Nov. 26th, 1879 (*Midlothian*, first series, p. 34).

[3] Mr. Gladstone's first Midlothian visit extends from Nov. 24th to Dec. 6th, 1879 (including a visit to Glasgow), and his second visit from March 17th to April 2nd, 1880. The speeches of the first series are published by Ridgway, London, and those of both series together by Andrew Elliott, Edinburgh, in a cheaper form. These

The fame of the Midlothian speeches is so great that the many utterances in which other members of the Opposition preached the same doctrine are apt to be forgotten. The Midlothian speeches were not a new revelation from Mr. Gladstone. They were indeed the most striking single feature of that appeal to the electors, which had been in progress since July 1878, an appeal founded upon considerations on which the leaders of the Liberal party, and the Liberal party as a whole, were agreed. Of all these considerations Mr. Gladstone was the foremost exponent; and although when he addressed his constituents, and when the election was fought, Lord Granville and Lord Hartington were the titular leaders of the party,[1] it is not strange that when the constituencies in 1880 responded to the appeal which had been made to them, Mr. Gladstone should be the man to whom the country looked to take up the Premiership.

During 1879 trouble began to loom large in Ireland. The Home Rule members of Parliament, under Mr. Parnell's guidance, adopted increasingly aggressive tactics, and the agrarian difficulty, aggravated by the inclement season and consequent distress, began to assume large proportions. On the eve of the elections, the Premier issued a manifesto in the form of a letter addressed to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, in which the Irish difficulty was pushed to the forefront, and the designs imputed to the Liberal party (identified by implication with the Home Rulers) were deprecated as inimical to the ascendency of England abroad. But the imputation was promptly repudiated, and Lord Beaconsfield's manifesto had but little effect in diverting the attention of the country from the aspects of the policy of the Government which had been so long pressed upon it.

> During the six years of the present Administration the improvement of Ireland and the content of our fellow-countrymen in that island have much occupied the care of the Ministry. . . .
>
> Nevertheless a danger, in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, and which now engages your Excellency's anxious attention, distracts that country. A portion of its population is attempting to sever the constitutional

speeches, especially those of the first series, constitute a kind of *locus classicus* for the Opposition side of the controversy. The references appended to the extracts cited in this and the preceding chapter are to Elliott's edition.

[1] I hope the verdict of the country will give to Lord Granville and Lord Hartington the responsible charge of its affairs.—*Mr. Gladstone*, Nov. 25th, 1879 (*Midlothian*, first series, p. 42).

tie which unites it to Great Britain in that bond which has favoured the power and prosperity of both.

It is to be hoped that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine. The strength of this nation depends on the unity of feeling which should pervade the United Kingdom and its widespread dependencies. The first duty of an English Minister should be to consolidate that co-operation which renders irresistible a community educated, as our own, in an equal love of liberty and law.

And yet there are some who challenge the expediency of the Imperial character of this realm. Having attempted, and failed, to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may perhaps now recognise in the disintegration of the United Kingdom a mode which will not only accomplish but precipitate their purpose.

Rarely in this century has there been an occasion more critical. The power of England and the peace of Europe will largely depend on the verdict of the country. . . . This ineffable blessing cannot be obtained by the passive principle of non-interference. Peace rests on the presence, not to say the ascendency, of England in the councils of Europe.—*Beaconsfield.*[1]

I know of no party which "challenges the expediency of the Imperial character of this realm;" I know of no one who has "attempted to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition." No patriotic purpose is, in my opinion, gained by the use of the language of exaggeration in describing the Irish agitation for Home Rule. I believe the demand so described to be impracticable, and considering that any concession, or appearance of concession, in this direction would be mischievous in its effects to the prosperity of Ireland, as well as that of England and Scotland, I have consistently opposed it in office and in opposition, and I shall continue to oppose it.—*Hartington.*[2]

Some of those who distrust and dislike Lord Beaconsfield's foreign policy, yet support his Government as the safeguard of peace and order in Ireland. . . . Those who think that a Conservative Administration headed by Lord Beaconsfield is more likely to refuse mischievous concessions than a Liberal Administration, have strangely misread contemporary history. . . . If the Irish vote became essential to a weak Conservative Ministry, the price demanded for it would almost certainly be paid. . . . A Conservative understanding with the revolutionary party in Ireland would be easily possible under Lord Beaconsfield. . . . His Imperialism and his dislike of Parliamentary control lend themselves far more easily than Liberal principles do to that system of federalism for which the Home Rulers contend, and in which a good many Tories desire to include our Colonial Empire. The

[1] Letter to the Duke of Marlborough, published in London papers, Mar. 9th, 1880.
[2] Address to the electors of North-east Lancashire, published in *D. N.* Mar. 11th, 1880.

Imperialism of Germany and of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which is now held up to English admiration, rests on this basis. In the democratic Toryism of Lord Beaconsfield, not untinged, as every reader of *Coningsby* and *Sybil* knows, by socialism, are the germs of that very policy in respect to Ireland which is apprehended. Lord Beaconsfield, when he is not the Minister of reaction, will be the Minister of revolution in Ireland as elsewhere, and in either character he will be equally dangerous. The mid-path of constitutional reform and prudent and timely concession will be pursued by a Liberal Ministry. Such a policy as this is the surest guarantee against Home Rule. Nothing can be more satisfactory than Lord Hartington's declaration on this point.—*D. N.* Apr. 6th.

The burden of the election speeches and addresses of the candidates, when the actual contest commenced, was little more than a repetition of the contentions which had been urged upon the country with such reiteration during the preceding twenty-one months.

The letter of Lord Beaconsfield to the Duke of Marlborough has been followed by the letters, which we mention in the order of their appearance, of Mr. Bright, Mr. Forster, Lord Hartington, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. W. H. Smith, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Cross, Mr. Childers, Mr. Lowe, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. Some of these compositions are marked by pointed and forcible expression. But it is vain to look in any of them for novelty of argument or any addition to the bases of the controversy. It is not within the bounds of what is humanly possible to say a new thing about the points in dispute between the two parties. The letters renew the wordy war which has been waged week by week, and month by month, and year after year in, we suppose, every city and borough of the United Kingdom.—*D. N.* March 13th.

It is, of course, impossible for us to give even an idea of the shoals of addresses published by the thousand or so of candidates standing for the 652 seats. As a rule the Tories follow their leaders' cue—exult in their foreign policy, declare that the Liberals would adopt strict non-intervention, and affirm, sometimes with a startling contempt for truth, that the Liberals are friendly to the Home Rule cry. The Liberals almost universally denounce the recent policy as a policy of "brag and blunder;" reject Home Rule, but promise equality of rights to Irishmen; and repudiate non-intervention.—*Spec.* Mar. 20th.

I explained to you, when I addressed you in September, the charges which I bring against the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government. They have followed un-English ways. Former Foreign Secretaries have upheld the honour of the country, without a recourse to the diplomatic devices and surprises which have marked Lord Salisbury's administration of foreign affairs. I

regret that the Government have thrown the influence and example of England on the side of militaryism instead of constitutionalism. I regret that by secret agreements and by the annexation of territory they have impaired the reputation of England as the most clean-handed member of the European family. I am frankly glad that Constantinople was kept out of Russian hands, but I deeply regret that the rising nationalities of the East were not taught to look to England as one of their staunchest friends, and that the fair claims of Greece are still unsatisfied.

The address of the Prime Minister gives no clue to the next adventure in which, if the country grants them blank powers, the Government may embark, nor to what alliances or engagements we may find ourselves committed. The public will not have forgotten the famous phrase of Lord Salisbury when he spoke of the alliance between Germany and Austria as "glad tidings of great joy."—*G. J. Goschen.*[1]

It is actually proclaimed aloud by the Prime Minister of the Queen, in a most momentous document, that England will not be contented with equality, but aspires to pre-eminence. And these vain and empty boastings are flaunted in the face of Europe as considerations which should influence our votes in the coming election. The question then resolves itself into this:—The Tory, or if they like it better the Conservative party, have fairly worn out their old principles. . . Their vocation, as Tories, is gone. Nothing remains for them but the attempt which they are making to gain for themselves a new position by stimulating the vanity of the people. . . . and diverting the mind of the nation from the honourable and useful arts of peace and industry, to incessant interference and rivalry with the other Powers of Europe. . . .

I believe that this election is to decide whether England is to be, as she has, upon the whole, been for the last sixty years—peaceful, laborious, seeking for glory by her pre-eminence in the arts of peace and in the goodwill of her Continental neighbours rather than by any claim or conduct which can wound the just susceptibilities of her Continental neighbours.—*Robert Lowe.*[2]

Constitutionalism had suffered at Lord Beaconsfield's hands and Conservatism had been degraded. The House of Commons had been degraded and we had flaunted in our eyes instead of the old usages of our Constitution the image of a personal government, not as a sovereign but as the favourite of a sovereign. Conservatism lay dead in this country and in its place we have that meaner thing, the creation of Lord Beaconsfield, modern Jingoism. The imputation contained in Lord Beaconsfield's letter with regard to the action of the Liberals tending to a disintegration of the Empire was libellous and false.—*Mr. Stansfeld,* March 15th.[3]

[1] Address to the electors of Ripon. See *D. N.* Mar. 12th.
[2] Letter to Sir Julian Goldsmid announcing his candidature for the London University, *D. N.* Mar. 13th.
[3] Addressing his constituents at Halifax.

It is not likely that I shall ever again seek a seat in the House of Commons. I have only done so now because of my overpowering sense of the danger and dishonour brought upon us by what may be summed up as Imperial policy. That policy has now received a blow from which it will not soon recover, and I shall gladly spend the rest of my life in such works of humble usefulness as fall to me to do.

But the terrible alarm we have gone through; the glimpse we have had of what Tory politicians are prepared to do; our experience of the determination of the powerful party who call themselves Conservatives to act as one machine, and never even to trouble themselves with questions of right and wrong; these things have convinced me, as I never was convinced before, how necessary it is to maintain a truly national organisation, which, whether called Whig, Liberal, Radical, or by any other name, will renounce meretricious Imperialism and all its works, and will cleave to the safe and sober courses of self-government, freedom, straightforward dealings, justice, and truth.—*Arthur Hobhouse.*[1]

§ 3. *The Issues on which the Contest turned.*

If the indications afforded by this great controversy have been read aright, the issues on which the General Election of 1880 mainly turned were the following:—

Firstly, there was an issue arising out of the particular question of foreign policy which had occupied the attention of the country. As between the "red" and the "violet" policies, which did the Constituencies retrospectively approve? Did the Constituencies wish to cast a vote of censure on the Government for their attitude with respect to Russia, Turkey, and Afghanistan?

Secondly, there was a wider and more general issue. Did the policy of the Government threaten constitutional liberty at home, and the security and peace of the country abroad?

Of course the Liberal party did not abandon their legislative programme,[2] but questions of domestic legislation fell into quite a subordinate place.[3]

[1] Letter to the Liberal Committee after his defeat for Westminster. Advertised in *D. N.* April 19th.

[2] Mr. Gladstone speaks of "some of our unredeemed engagements," and in a note gives a list of twenty-two of them. The first three items on his list are: (1) London Municipal Reform; (2) County Government; (3) County Franchise.—*19th Cent.* Sept. 1878.

Mr. Goschen published a letter (see *D. N.* July 18th, 1878) declining to stand for the City of London on the ground that his views on the County Franchise disqualified him at a crisis when everything must give way to the importance of the contest in the City being waged under the most favourable circumstances and with the strongest possible candidates.

[3] Very significant is such a resolution as that passed at the autumnal meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales held at Cardiff in 1879. The

The Liberal party for the time being became the party of resistance. Of resistance alike to hazardous enterprises, and to the introduction of dangerous innovations by which the practice of the Constitution was being deteriorated.[1]

At a great meeting of the Liberals of North Wales,[2] the first resolution was to the effect:—

> That the dangers to which our country is exposed from the unconstitutional and reckless course of the present Government render it more and more necessary that the Liberals should use their united efforts in order that they may successfully oppose a policy so disastrous to their best interests, and so degrading to the honour of the nation.

The second resolution thanked Mr. Gladstone for "the noble efforts he has made to expose and counteract the secret and imperious policy of the Prime Minister."

Resolutions of this kind struck the key-note, which was repeated again and again during the electoral campaign.

> It would be quite out of place were I to refer to pending questions of legislation, and I only even mention them in the mass, in order that it may not be supposed that they are not before my mind. Undoubtedly on the present occasion, if my conviction be well founded, whatever questions of legislation there may be, there is another question antecedent to them all. It is quite impossible, if the charges that we make can be sustained, it is quite impossible, I think, for any reasonable person endeavouring calmly to weigh those issues, and to estimate their likelihood, to put such a value upon any question of legislation as not to see the great subjects which have been raised in the method of carrying on the government of this country are the conduct that has been pursued toward Parliament, the manner in which popular rights

resolution (which was seconded by Mr. Henry Richard, M.P.) was to the effect that the assembly, believing it of the last importance that the reckless policy of the previous few years should be reversed, urged the members of the churches to use their votes and influence at the next election to secure its condemnation. "The Assembly does not, in view of the election, counsel silence on the part of Nonconformists in relation to questions touching upon religious equality, but in the presence of the great political difficulties of the time it feels that this is a crisis in which even these ought not to be allowed to prevent the union of the Liberal party for the purpose of putting an end to the costly and mischievous *régime* which has proved to be so full of menace to our constitutional liberty at home, and to derogate from our good name and our legitimate influence amongst other nations."—*Cardiff Times*, Oct. 18th, 1879.

[1] How far the result of the General Election of 1880 checked such deterioration is of course another matter.

[2] Held at Rhyl, Oct. 31st, 1878.

have been prejudiced, and the great and fundamental question of finance. The whole method of carrying on the government is the question which, if you are in earnest, you must undertake to deal with; and you must look to the subject of legislation, and the prosecution of useful legislation, as one which you cannot satisfactorily or with good promise entertain until you have got rid of that grievous preliminary question.—*Mr. Gladstone*, Aug. 19th, 1879.[1]

When a Liberal majority is once more returned to Parliament there will be no lack of subjects of internal interest to which it may turn its attention. I will not conceal from you my opinion that before Parliament is again able to devote itself undisturbed to the task of internal reform there will be much to be done. Much of the work of the Liberal party in former times has been to undo mischievous legislation, and our task will now be to undo, not a system of mischievous legislation, but a mischievous policy—to restore confidence abroad and at home, and, as a preliminary to our work of internal or social reform, to restore the authority of Parliament.—*Lord Hartington*, Sept. 19th, 1879.[2]

[Lord Derby's][3] adherence to the Liberals, then, undoubtedly, means this—first, that while he does not fear, or does not greatly fear, the sort of changes in the Constitution and policy which the Liberals for the most part press on the country, he does very greatly fear the sort of changes in the Constitution and the policy which Tory Democrats press on the country.—*Spec.* Oct. 25th, 1879.

It is, gentlemen, a new method of government to which we are now subjected, and if you, instead of being Liberals, were an assembly of those who call themselves Conservatives, I would appeal to you and say that of all Administrations which have been in power within the last half century, there never has been one which has ventured upon so many measures, not only mischievous, but new-fangled, with the effect of vexing and alarming the people of the country and compromising the interests of the Empire. —*Mr. Gladstone*, Nov. 24th.[4]

Do not let us suppose that it is like the old question between Whig and Tory. It is nothing of the kind. It is not now as if we were disputing about some secondary matter—it is not even as if we were disputing about the Irish Church, which no doubt was a very important affair. What we are disputing about is a

[1] At Chester.
[2] At Newcastle-on-Tyne.
[3] Lord Derby's *definite* adherence to the Liberals dates perhaps from March 12th, 1880, on which day he addressed a letter to Lord Sefton in which he declared himself, however reluctantly, ranked among the opponents of the Government. "But the present position of parties and the avowed policy of the Conservative leader in reference to foreign relations leaves me no choice."—See *D. N.* Mar. 15th, 1880.
[4] *Midlothian*, first series, p. 12. Compare Nov. 25th, p. 16.

whole system of government and to make good that proposition that it is a whole system of government, will be my great object in any addresses that I may deliver in this country. . . .

If this great and free and powerful people is disposed to associate itself with such transactions, if it is disposed to assume upon itself what some of us would call the guilt, and many of us must declare to be the heavy burden of all those events that have been passing before our eyes, it rests with them to do it. But, gentlemen, let every one of us resolve . . . . . that he will exempt himself from every participation in what he believes to be mischievous and ruinous misdeeds. . . . . This is the issue which the people of this country will have to try. . . . . I for my part have done and will do the little that rests with me to make clear the nature of the great controversy that is to be decided.—*Mr. Gladstone*, Nov. 25th.[1]

If ever a general election was fought out on one clear issue, the election now nearly over has been fought to decide the opinion of the constituencies on the foreign policy of the Government. It is not a question of undoing everything Lord Beaconsfield has done. Nobody thinks of such a course. The question before the constituencies was whether Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues were men who could be safely trusted any longer with the foreign policy of the country.—*D. N.* April 14th, 1880.

§ 4. *The Event of the General Election.*

The dissolution came at last somewhat unexpectedly. For a moment Lord Beaconsfield had dazzled the country, and there were those who thought that had a dissolution taken place immediately after the return from Berlin, the Government would have secured a large majority. At all events, at that juncture the confidence of Lord Beaconsfield's opponents in their hold over Public Opinion ebbed to its lowest point, and they were just then as averse to the prospect of an immediate dissolution as they had been eager for it in the early part of 1877.

We may state our present impression. It is that the great body of the new electors greatly enjoy seeing fireworks. They are amused and interested by Lord Beaconsfield's strokes and surprises and unexpected turns of policy, and are very unwilling indeed to return to the sober, every-day work of life. As long as he can keep up the attraction, and put some colour in grey lives, so long will they be disposed to let him remain master of the

[1] *Midlothian*, first series, pp. 26 and 29, 30.

entertainment. Nevertheless, though eager for a junketing, an excitement, a grand "scene," they are Englishmen after all, are not disposed to pay too much for their fun, are a little ashamed of electing a conjuror to so high a position, and are getting a little chilly under the cold wind called in politics "industrial distress." They feel poorer than they did, they are rather tired of hearing fireworks described as meteors, and they are half-disposed to leave the political Vauxhall before it begins to rain. They may stay for a last transformation scene, if the promises of limelight and effects are very vigorous; but if their mood deepens they may also go home disenchanted, and then the glittering harlequinade will be suddenly shut up. Whether they will stay through another act depends on the next "effect," and if it does not come off or if the supply of limelight is scanty, there may be some hissing heard in the galleries that will drown any applause in the stalls.—*Spec.* July 6th, 1878.

But as time went on, the glitter began to fade.

If you had been present in Parliament last month you would have been singularly struck with the change which has come over the spirit of both parties since last August. I never saw a minority so confident in the hour of defeat, nor a majority so dejected in their victory. We have seen in the English constituencies within the last few months that they have given fewer votes to the supporters of the Administration, and more votes to its opponents. Be of good cheer; there is a good time coming. I do not wonder that the Government shrink from the name of "dissolution," with which they were once so fond of menacing us.—*Sir Wm. Harcourt,* Jan 15th, 1879.

My lords, you are beginning to be found out. The people of this country are beginning to see that you have not obtained for them what they expected. It is not we, the members of the Opposition, who are accusing you. Time is your great accuser; the course of events is summing up the case against you. What have you to say—I shall await to hear—what have you to say why you should not receive an adverse verdict at the hands of the public, as you certainly will be called upon to receive it at the bar of history?—*Duke of Argyll, H. of L.* May 16th, 1879.

Rumour attributed to the Government an intention to postpone the dissolution to the beginning of 1881, the utmost term allowed by the law.[1]

The meeting of Parliament, as usual, for the despatch of business on Feb. 5th, 1880, when its seventh session commenced, pointed to the correctness of such expectations.

[1] See Mr. Gladstone's strictures on this supposed intention of the Government, Nov. 25th, 1879 (*Midlothian,* first series, p. 32).

Several bye-elections fell early in 1880.[1] From the indications they afforded, it might seem to men who were anxiously watching the auspices that a favourable moment had come.

On Monday evening, March 8th, Sir Stafford Northcote suddenly announced in the House of Commons that the dissolution would take place immediately after the conclusion of necessary and formal business. Parliament was prorogued on March 24th, and dissolved the same evening.

It was in no over-sanguine mood that the Liberals entered upon the contest. Many, through all discouragement, had clung to the belief that Public Opinion was with them, as to the true faith. But the confidence of 1876 had given place to uncertainty, and the true faith was often obscured by doubts.

Now that the moment had come when, as it seemed to them, the choice must be made whether or not the destinies of the country should be intrusted to those whose aim it was to transform it into a military Empire, they were almost awed by the momentous character of the decision, and could not wholly divest themselves of the fear that the sober would be out-numbered by those whom the prospect dazzled, and that those mentors might be right who confidently affirmed the accord between the Government and the nation.[2]

The opening of the contest did much to dissipate these fears.

> Gentlemen, a great State trial is proceeding. . . . I figure to myself those who have constituted the majority of the late House of Commons as the persons arraigned, and the Constituencies of the country as those who are called together in the solemn order of the Constitution to hear the evidence and to pronounce the verdict. That evidence has been pretty largely given. That verdict we await. We have none of the forms of a judicial trial. There are no peers in Westminster Hall, there are no judges on

[1] The most important of them were :—

Feb. 6th, Liverpool:—
Whitley (C.) 26,106
Ramsay (L.) . . . . . 23,883—Majority, 2,223.

Feb. 14th, Southwark :—
Clarke, E. (C.) 7,683
Dunn (L.) 6,830
Shipton (Labour) . . . . . 799—Majority, 853.

[2] See "Public Opinion and its Leaders," T. Wemyss Reid, *Fort. Rev.* Aug. 1880, for quotations from *Times* just before the general election, showing its mistaken diagnosis.

> the woolsack; but if we concentrate our minds upon the truth of the case as apart from its mere exterior, it is a grander and more august spectacle than ever was exhibited either in Westminster Hall or in the House of Lords.—*Mr. Gladstone*, April 2nd, 1880.[1]

Day by day as the contest proceeded it became more clear that the Constituencies were pronouncing in favour of the Opposition. The majority which from the first had been evident became large, and at last overwhelming. On Wednesday, April 21st, Lord Beaconsfield held his last Cabinet Council, and laid down his great office.

[1] *Midlothian*, second series, pp. 78-91.

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